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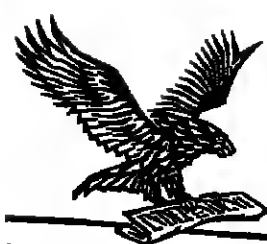
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Nº 8,321

THE INDEPENDENT

THURSDAY 12 JUNE 1997

WEATHER: Dry start, showers later

(R 45p) 40p



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TEA: DOES IT DRIVE YOU MAD?

INSIDE THE TABLOID

EDUCATION+ WHEN THE BULLY IS A TEACHER



IN THE TABLOID: CINEMA

KAMA SUTRA BRINGS BAD KARMA

Revealed at last: Why boys will be boys and girls will be girls

Charles Arthur
Science Editor

It's the gene that explains female intuition. It's the gene that explains why you can persuade a group of adolescent men to attack a machine-gun emplacement. It's the gene that explains why New Men are made, not born.

Its effects may be subtle, but a team of British scientists is quite certain that they have tracked it down to the X chromosome - one of the two sex chromosomes.

The discovery marks the first time that behavioural differences between sexes have been pinpointed to a single location on one chromosome. Its implications are far-reaching. Professor David Skuse, who led the research at the Institute of Child Health, said: "It may imply that we need to think seriously about providing more structured social education for boys, compared to girls."

He emphasised that the gene is not a "gene for criminality", or for misbehaviour - though it may explain why boys can more easily be persuaded to behave badly; they are less able to see that their behaviour is errant.

Both men and women have the gene - but it is only "switched on" in women. Its effect is to make them responsive

to others and able to recognise social norms without prompting.

"Feminine intuition comes about by observing non-verbal behaviour," said Professor Skuse. "It has a genetic origin. It's nothing to do with hormones. Boys aren't poor at this because of testosterone. It's because of the X chromosome."

Such a definite sexual split in the allocation of a gene would have to have an evolutionary advantage for both genders. Professor Skuse said: "While girls pick up social skills from those around them, boys are a blank slate to be written upon. The question is, why is it advantageous for males to be socially insensitive? We don't know for sure."

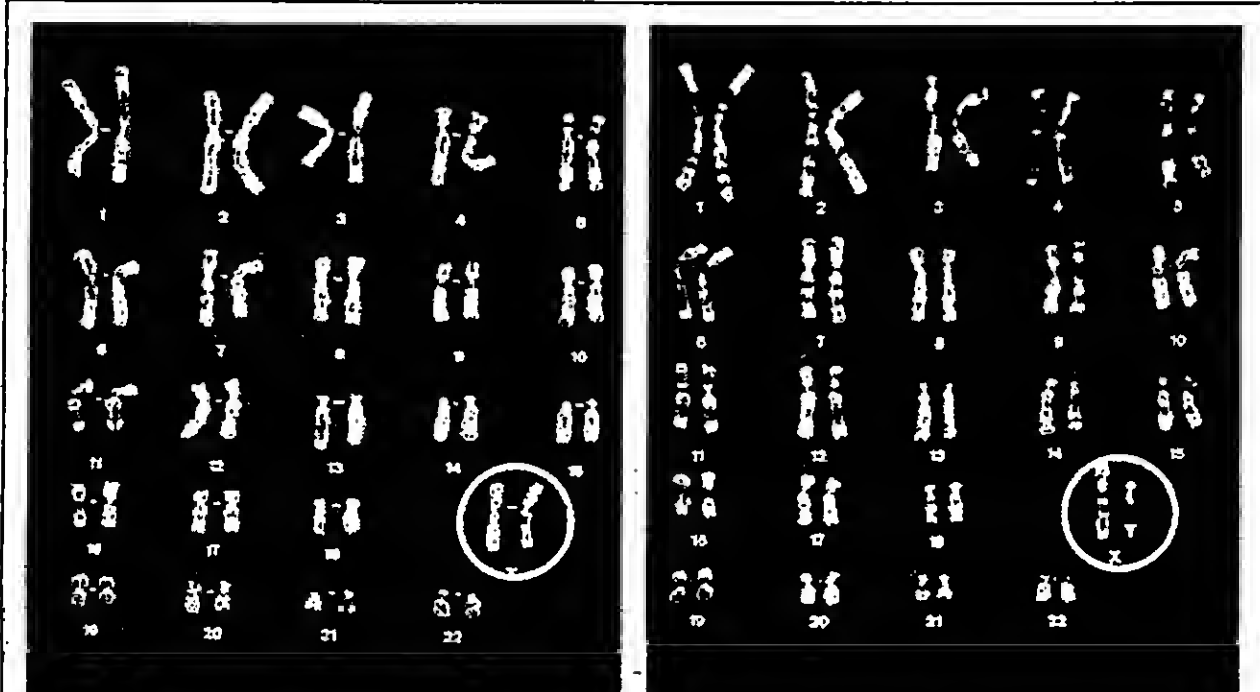
"It could mean that it's easier for a dominant male in a tribe to recruit them to a bunting party - or even for war. I don't think many young women would be prepared to go into the face of guns like young men did at Gallipoli. And being less empathic makes it easier to go out and kill somebody."

But he did have some reassuring words. "This finding does not mean that men are incapable of learning social skills. But it does mean they have to be taught them."

New Men, therefore, can only occur through education - they aren't born to the role.



The sexual divide: A definite split in the allocation of a gene would have to have an evolutionary advantage for both genders, according to Professor David Skuse who has led the research
Photograph: Jason Nye



The chromosomes pictured at the left come from a woman - because the sex chromosomes are both Xs (circled). The other set comes from a man, because it includes the X and Y sex genes (circled, right): you must have a Y gene to be male. Though both sexes

have the "intuition" gene, located somewhere near the centre of the X chromosome, it only functions in women.

Men carry a silent copy of the gene, which they can pass to their daughters - who receive a working version.

The gene was pinpointed by interviewing and testing women with a rare genetic disorder called Turner's Syndrome. They have a single X chromosome, inherited from their mother or father.

Photographs: Science Photo Library

Like all other genes, this one instructs the body to make a single protein, which has not yet been identified. But Professor Skuse doubted that we will ever be able to bottle feminine intuition. The protein seems to affect the brain, probably during the embryo stage.

The conclusion, reported today in the science journal *Nature*, emerged from interviews with parents of children who have a

rare genetic condition known as Turner's Syndrome. Normally, men have an X chromosome (inherited from their mother) and a Y chromosome (from their father); women have two X chromosomes, each inherited from their parents. Turner's Syndrome, which only affects females, is caused by faulty cell division before conception, and leaves them with a single X chromosome rather than two

because the egg or sperm fails to deliver an X chromosome.

Girls with the syndrome are usually of normal intelligence, but they frequently struggle to learn social behaviour such as recognising non-verbal signals.

Psychological tests on 80 girls with this condition found that the effect was more marked in those who had received their single X gene from their mothers. In those whose X gene came

from their father, the lack of social skills was less marked.

This is because of a process called "imprinting": when two copies of a gene are inherited, only one will function. The "intuition" gene is turned off in the father's cells - but turned on, or imprinted, in his sperm. By contrast, the gene is turned off in the mother's egg cells - meaning that under normal circumstances a male cannot inherit feminine intuition.

Redwood tells Tories to say sorry

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

A searing attack on the honesty and integrity of Kenneth Clarke and William Hague was delivered by John Redwood yesterday at the start of the second round of the Conservative leadership contest.

He also told a Commons press conference the Tory party should apologise for the lies told in the 1992 election: "We have to say sorry," he said.

His main onslaught was reserved for Mr Hague. The party's 164 MPs were warned if they voted for Mr Hague to stop himself or Mr Clarke becoming leader, they would repeat the mistake of 1990 and end up with another John Major.

With the three remaining runners vying for the floating votes of about 36 MPs who voted for Peter Lilley and Michael Howard on Tuesday, the pace and the language became sharper yesterday.

Mr Clarke said in a frantic round of media interviews that the party had to come to its senses and elect him as the man able to confront Labour's overwhelming majority.

He suggested Mr Hague had not yet got the style, personality or views to make him a Conservative prime minister. "William one day could play a leading role," he added.

Mr Clarke's side-swipe was as nothing compared to the vituperation of Mr Redwood. "William isn't quite sure whether he wants more European government or less European government. He would like the Europe question to rest there, unanswered, hoping that Europe might go away," he said.

On the single currency, Mr Redwood warned in Churchillian tones: "An ostrich Conservative Party will never fly. It will bury its head in the sand at its peril..."

"The danger of William's position, as I understand it, is that it leaves the question hanging in the air. The answer has to be never to the single currency."

Mr Redwood accepted Tony Blair's election charge that the Tories had lied in the 1992 election, on tax, VAT on fuel, Europe, the NHS and the recession: "In order to win again, we must first re-establish our reputation for telling the truth."

Iain Duncan Smith, the Redwood campaign manager, said: "One of the reasons why we lost the last election is because the public got to believe that people in this party would do anything, say anything, go behind closed doors and stitch up anything, to stay with their hands on the lever of power."

He said Mr Redwood's campaign was based on the themes of "Honesty, integrity and decency."

Asked how that distinguished him from his opponents, Mr Redwood deliberately impugned their honesty and integrity, saying to the laughter of his supporters: "I have never said they lack decency..."

Mr Redwood said: "I do not want to split the difference. I want to make the difference. I do not want to stop another candidate, I want to win with a positive programme."

Speaking for the campaign team, Mr Duncan Smith said: "You cannot base the electing of a leader on stopping somebody else."

Referring to the 1990 leadership contest, when some MPs voted for Mr Major to stop Michael Heseltine, Mr Duncan Smith added: "We went through this six or seven years ago. If we are to repeat the process, if we look for a stop-gap rather than a stop somebody, we will end up with nothing."

Politics, pages 8 and 9
Profile of Hague, page 22

From killer to victim: Basher's death sums up the futility of the Troubles

David McKibbick
Ireland Correspondent



Target for revenge: Bates with two of his grandchildren after his recent release from prison
Photograph: Pacemaker

Robert "Basher" Bates, who was gunned down in Belfast yesterday, was an icon. To some he represented the very worst that the troubles has produced: to others he was testimony that even the most brutal terrorist might not be beyond redemption.

Two decades ago the 10 murders he was involved in were among the most barbaric ever seen. He shot some of his victims but others he killed in the most cruel fashion, he and his associates welded butcher's knives, axes and cleavers on random Catholic victims. The Shankill Butchers slaughtered human beings as one would animals.

The horror of those killings took Belfast to a new low. Yesterday his death conjured up the most appalling vista of all: that the IRA was intent on regenerating the troubles. The relief was palpable when it emerged that he had been killed not by the IRA but by a loyalist, in what is thought to have been personal revenge for the murder by Bates of a close relative, 20 years ago in a bar room brawl.

Basher Bates was one of hundreds of convicted killers released after serving an average of 15 years behind bars. There are hundreds of unsettled

personal grudges in Northern Ireland: quite a few people know, or think they know, who killed their fathers or other loved ones. Yet this seems to have been the first personal revenge killing of a released prisoner.

While loyalist groups have accounted for close on 1,000 of the 3,500 victims of the Troubles, the ferocity and awfulness of the Shankill Butchers' killings have remained in the public memory for two full decades.

A book dwelling on the graphic details has been a local bestseller for 20 years, and can still be picked up in many of the garage shops of Belfast. It was, for example, the favourite reading of Thomas Begley, the young IRA man who four years ago carried a bomb into a Shankill Road fish shop, killing himself and nine Protestants.

Bates was not the prime mover in the Shankill Butchers gang: that was UVF man Lennie Murphy, who was shot dead by the IRA in 1982. But he was one of the leading lights during their two-year reign of terror, and one photograph of him, looking like an unshaven, unkempt dullard, has remained lodged in the communal memory as a vision of a psychopathic killer.

The judge who gave him 16 life sentences for his killings told him, cor-

rectly, that his actions "will remain forever a lasting monument to blind sectarian bigotry." When he told him he should remain behind bars for the rest of his natural life, society shuddered and hoped it had heard the last of Basher Bates.

But Northern Ireland has a scheme, not found in the rest of the UK, for the release of even the most notorious killers, and more than 300 loyalists and republicans have been quietly freed over the last decade. Many of these former lifers engross themselves, as Bates seemed to be doing, in community or welfare work.

As the years passed in jail, Bates was at first a difficult prisoner, then a troubled soul and finally a remorseful born-again Christian, praying fervently for forgiveness. One who knew him in prison said of him: "He's now a shell of a man, very quiet and inoffensive in a bland kind of way. The hair has gone, he's prematurely bald. He has found the Lord and he's no threat to anyone."

Basher Bates made a long and painful journey from merciless assassin to man of God. His personal odyssey seemed to be over: neither he nor anyone else could have foreseen the fateful circularity which in the end transformed him from killer to victim.



Maurice Lacroix
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Memorial in doubt
British artist Rachel Whiteread disclosed that the Holocaust memorial she designed for Vienna may never be installed because of political in-fighting. Page 7

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Baccalaureate-style studies for sixth-formers

The Government yesterday left the way open for reform of the sixth form curriculum as it announced plans to defer changes to A-levels and vocational courses, and develop a single umbrella certificate.

Though government sources are playing down the delay, the proposed "overarching certificate" for young people, encompassing academic or vocational subjects and key skills indicates ministers are prepared to go further than their Conservative predecessors in overhauling post-16 qualifications.

The plans could include a version of the French baccalaureate, which would require sixth form pupils to take a range of subjects including arts and sciences.

Lucy Ward

Referendum Party cannot claim libel

A judge ruled yesterday that Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party could not bring an action for libel.

Allowing political parties to sue for defamation would impose an undesirable fetter on free speech in a democratic society and was against the public interest, Mr Justice Buckley ruled.

Sir James and the party had complained in writs about a report headed "Goldsmith looks for dignified exit from election race" in *Sunday Business* on 23 March. The judge gave leave to appeal.

Patricia Wynn Davies

Surrogacy expenses to be capped



Expenses paid to surrogate mothers could be capped following an independent review of surrogacy law announced by the Government yesterday.

Tessa Jowell (left), the health minister, said that a team of three experts will investigate whether a body should be set up to regulate the arrangements made by childless couples to women who agree to bear children for them.

Surrogacy must not be commercialised and a surrogate mother cannot be forced to give up her baby if she changes her mind. Parents are allowed to pay surrogate mothers or give them expenses but it is illegal for a third party to profit from a surrogacy arrangement.

Glenda Cooper

Serial rapist struck across Britain

A serial rapist who has terrorised women in the North of England and the Midlands might be responsible for a string of attacks throughout Britain.

Up to 25 new victims of the sex attacker, who has been positively linked with at least five crimes in 13 years, have come forward after an appeal on BBC1's *Crimewatch UK* on Tuesday.

The publicity prompted more than 1,000 calls, at least half of which named possible suspects. Another 25 were from women who thought they may have been victims of the man. Calls from Scotland, Ireland, Berkshire, Hertfordshire and Hampshire are among those to be investigated, as well as from West Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire – the three counties where the rapist is known to have struck before.

Inmates board prison ship

The first inmates were safely loaded aboard a controversial new prison ship yesterday. From early morning the men, all low security category D inmates, were taken by buses to Weymouth in Dorset from neighbouring jails. Twenty-one were expected to spend the night moored off the Dorset coast aboard the *HMP Weare*, which is Britain's first prison ship since Victorian times.

Stowaways found on Eurostar

Four stowaways were found hidden under a Eurostar train after surviving the journey under the English Channel from France. They were discovered in an inspection hatch underneath the train, which halted at Ashford, Kent, after passing through the Channel Tunnel. Passengers said they were told the stowaways were Moldovans but their nationality could not be confirmed by police.

Ex-policemen jailed in Cyprus

Two former British policemen were jailed for 18 months yesterday after admitting burglary in an industrial espionage case in Cyprus. Retired Detective Chief Inspector Michael Flack and ex-Detective Constable Paul Whybrow claimed they were "set up" as they investigated the unlawful copying of patented pharmaceutical products on the island. Both confessed to stealing documents from a customs clearing office in February. Whybrow, 47, and Flack, 52, from Bexley, south-east London, pleaded guilty to a single burglary charge at the criminal court in Limassol.

people



Denise Stacey: Determined to win compensation from employers (Photograph: Keith Dobson)

'Auf Wiedersehn' wife fights for justice for her husband

The wife of a British bricklayer who tumbled to his death from a luxury German apartment block will next week bring an historic criminal prosecution against his employers.

Denise Stacey, a mother of two young children, will fly to Germany to act as joint prosecutor with the Leipzig state prosecutor in bringing a case of negligent manslaughter against British and German construction bosses.

David Carter, a director of David Carter construction Management of Amersham, and two directors of ABN, a firm of German developers, are also charged with endangering the lives of their workers.

Mrs Stacey's husband, Len, died from horrific injuries after falling from the roof of the Leipzig flats, three years ago. There was no scaffolding or netting around the building to break his fall.

Despite intense pressure to let the matter rest, including threats made to her personal safety, Mrs Stacey has been determined to bring the matter before the courts. She said: "I have had to fight tooth and nail. They wanted to cover up my husband's death."

The hearing will be a landmark case in Germany and could open the way for a wave of litigation claims against Germany's booming construction industry. She has the backing of IGBAU, the German construction union, which believes that many more foreign workers have been killed or injured because of lax safety standards. German law allows for victims or their families to act as co-prosecutors in criminal proceedings in exceptional cases.

It was at the height of the last recession that Mr Stacey joined the ranks of British building workers in Germany, adopting the lifestyle depicted in the television drama *Auf Wiedersehn*. He had been working in Germany for six months when he was knocked from the top of the unfinished building after a pile of concrete blocks fell around him.

At an inquest in Uxbridge, the coroner likened Mr Stacey's injuries to that of a plane crash victim. The coroner said that Mr Stacey would have survived if the building had had safety rails.

The case opens on Tuesday at the Ellenburg criminal court, near Leipzig. One of the witnesses will be Leonard Johnson, a Kent construction worker, who was opening a pallet of concrete blocks when it accidentally collapsed. Blocks fell onto Mr Stacey, who was kneeling down, and he was knocked over the side of the building.

The building firms have strenuously denied liability. In a statement to the German authorities, Mr Carter said that the workers were independent tradesmen and were responsible for their own safety.

Ian Burrell

New drama head at BBC

Colin Adams, the BBC's northern broadcasting head, has been picked to fill the long-empty top spot in the BBC's drama department.

Adams, who has been acting as head of the drama department along with director of production Alan Yentob for the last six months, has taken what some in the corporation have described as a poisoned chalice.

The BBC's last head of drama, Charles Denton, quit in May 1996 after overseeing a string of hits

such as *Hamish Macbeth* and *Balhykissangel*. However, the failure of expensive serials such as *Rhodes* – which cost £10m to make – *Nostromo* (above) and *Ivanhoe* has put the department under pressure to come up with a hit.

Insiders also say the role of drama head has become less attractive because of director general John Birt's latest restructuring of the BBC into Broadcasting and Production directorates.

Sir Christopher Bland, chairman of the BBC board of governors, pointedly criticised the delay in appointing a drama head and some of the drama department's output in front of journalists earlier this year.

Paul McCann

Divorce settled – after 30 years

A woman accused by her ex-husband of bringing "nothing into the marriage except twelve packets of crisps and four pounds one shilling and sixpence" was yesterday told she was entitled to a share of the £250,000 house where they lived – nearly 30 years after they divorced.

Lord Woolf, the Master of the Rolls, Lord Justice Ward, and Lord Justice Millett were told in the Court of Appeal that all Patricia Hill received in settlement after the divorce in 1969 was a maintenance order for their two sons, £75 in cash and a second-hand Mini.

The judges decided that she could make claims for a lump sum payment and share of the house after hearing that the couple had cohabited for 25 years after the divorce, before finally splitting when John Hill went off with her best friend.

Mr Hill was refused leave to appeal to the House of Lords. Mrs Hill agreed with her former husband that she did not bring much money into the marriage but said she also had "a packet of Ritz biscuits and half a pound of margarine".

briefing

ASTRONOMY

Earth followed through space by asteroid

As it orbits the sun, the Earth is being preceded through space by an asteroid the size of Islington – though scientists are confident there is no risk of it crashing in to us.

Known simply as 3753, the asteroid is about 5km (3.1 miles) across, and on an orbit inclined at 20 degrees to that of the sun and planets. It was discovered a decade ago, but scientists have now worked out that its orbit is locked to the Earth's. As it moves ahead of us, its path relative to the Earth looks like a kidney bean, so that it actually takes 150 years to return to exactly the same point in space. The closest approach to Earth happens every 385 years, when it is 40 times further away than the Moon.

"This behaviour is not unusual in itself," say the researchers, led by Paul Weigert at York University in Canada, in the science journal *Nature*. "What distinguishes 3753 from other near-Earth asteroids is its behaviour as it approaches Earth: our planet's gravitational pull acts to increase the asteroid's period from slightly below to slightly above one year."

The effect of that slowing effect on the asteroid's path is also to keep us alive: our planet's gravitational pull makes the asteroid begin to fall behind the Earth's orbit, and it therefore moves away from Earth, avoiding a collision.

Charles Arthur

HOUSING

Property prices heading for boom

House prices climbed by more than 8 per cent in a year, though this rise disguised wide regional variations, according to official figures issued by the Land Registry yesterday. London notched up the sharpest increases, but Leicestershire, Dorset and Northumberland were among other house price winners.

The figures for England and Wales compared the period January to March 1997 with the same three-month period last year. The average house price is £72,900 – up 8.6 per cent on the January to March 1996 figure of £67,097.

Prices in parts of London and the south-east have been soaring in recent months, partly as a result of property shortages. In the London borough of Camden, a detached house which would have cost an average of £375,000 early last year has rocketed to around £640,000.

The average price of a house in Greater London as a whole has burst through the six-figure barrier, reaching £107,900 – up 12.2 per cent on the January to March 1996 figure of £96,220.



ECONOMY

Regional earnings divide persists

The rich regions got richer and the poor ones poorer in 1995, according to the latest regional breakdown published by the Office for National Statistics.

Income per head in London was 25 per cent above the UK average, and 15 per cent above average in the rest of the south-east – both higher than two years earlier. By contrast, incomes in the north-east slipped to 85 per cent of the national average, and in Wales to 84 per cent. Northern Ireland, however, overtook the north-east, with incomes climbing from 86.4 per cent to 87.4 per cent of the average.

Social security benefits accounted for a bigger share of peoples' incomes in Wales than in any other region, making up a fifth of total income per head. At the other extreme, benefits made up only 11 per cent of south-easterners' incomes.

Diane Coyle

HEALTH

HRT reduces risk of cataracts

Hormone replacement therapy for post-menopausal women may benefit the eyes as well as preventing brittle bones, researchers said yesterday. A study in Spain found a reduced incidence of lens opacity, a precursor of age-related cataract, in post-menopausal women taking oestrogen.

Cataracts, which cause cloudiness and hardening of the lens of the eye, are a leading cause of blindness and affect 90 per cent of people aged over 75. Scientists have long suspected that female hormones may play a role in the development of age-related cataracts, since more women suffer from them than men.

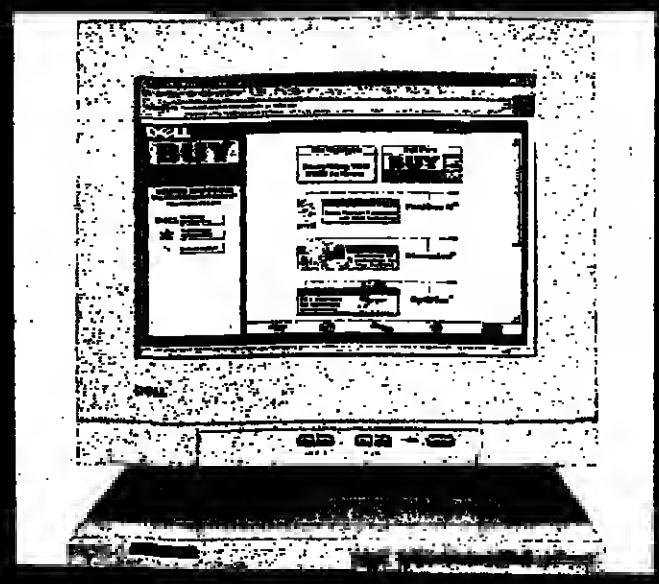
Scientists from the Ramon y Cajal Institute in Madrid examined the eyes of 19 post-menopausal women taking oestrogen, 23 post-menopausal women not taking oestrogen, and 23 men.

The researchers, whose findings were published in the American journal *Ophthalmology*, found that the women taking oestrogen had significantly less lens opacity compared with the other groups.

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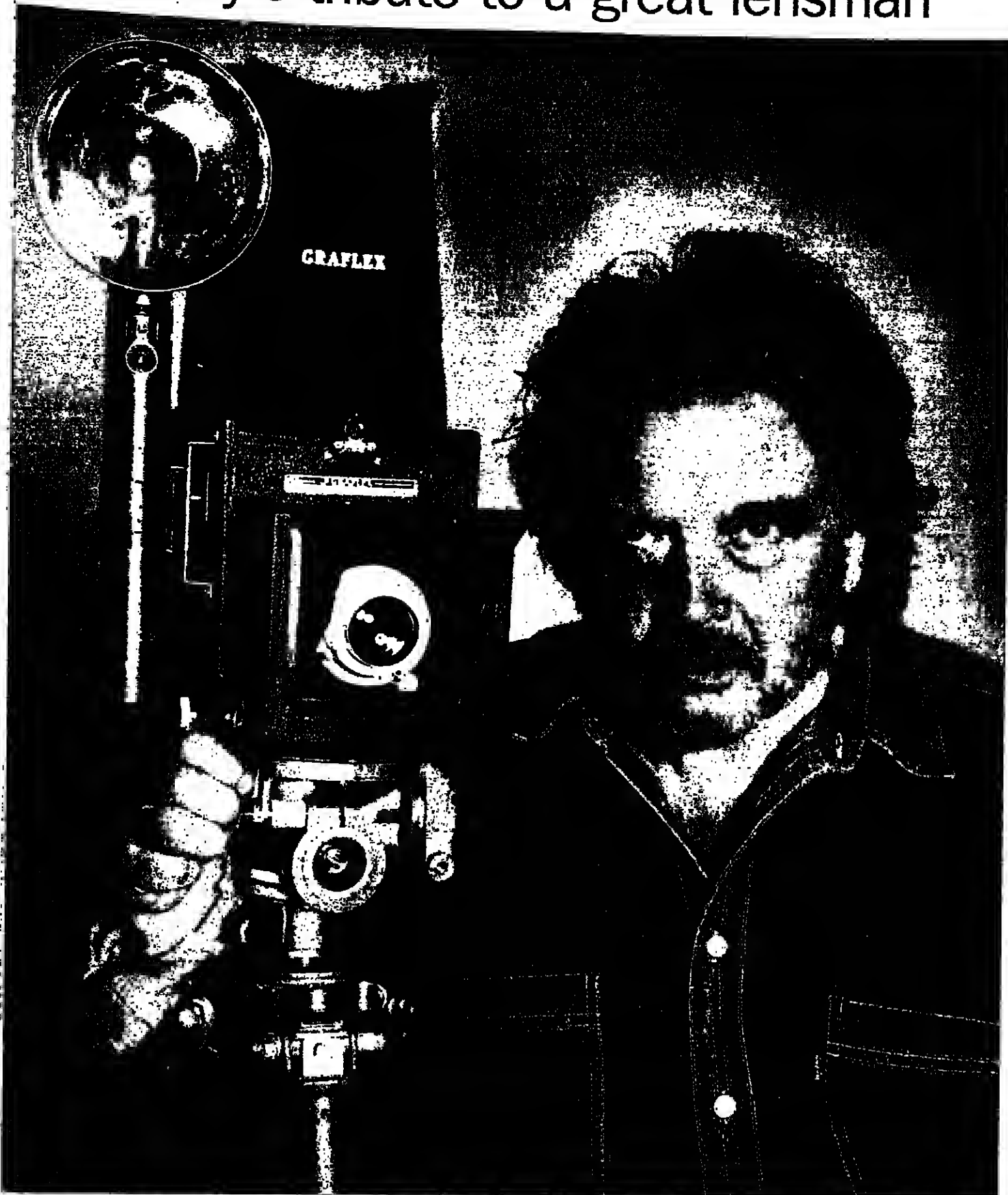
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Bailey's tribute to a great lensman



Lens to remember: The photographer David Bailey with a Graflex SLR, one of the of the favourite cameras of his friend the late Terence Donovan. The camera, estimate £120-180, will be auctioned with the rest of Donovan's cameras today at Christie's South Kensington. Photograph: Nick Clark

Strange case of the million dollar actress and an indecent proposal

John Lichfield
Paris

Arab princes, an American actress, call-girls, arms deals and secret agents... A routine investigation of de-luxe prostitution has brought French police and magistrates into dangerous diplomatic waters and uncovered a world straight from the pages of an airport novel.

The investigation, which began eight months ago, has revealed a call-girl network with tentacles around the globe and a clientele including Saudi princes, and other Gulf potentates, according to the newspaper *Le Monde*. Several witnesses have spoken of the brokering of a \$1m sexual encounter in the South of France between an unidentified American actress and a member of a Gulf royal family.

The previous French government placed a brake on the investigation, apparently for fear of harming sales of military hardware to the Gulf. The new Socialist justice minister, Elisabeth Guigou, faces a tricky decision on whether to free the inquiry from its political shackles.

The first signs are that the investigation is already proceeding with renewed vigour. Earlier this week, the French vice squad arrested for questioning Paul Baril, a former gendarmierie captain, once on the security staff of the Elysée palace. Mr Baril, who now works for the



Pierre Baril, formerly on François Mitterrand's security staff at the Elysée, denies the accusations of involvement in a call-girl ring for which he was arrested this week

rondissement, one of the wealthiest quarters of Paris. The inquiry led to the arrest in January of a Swedish, former model, Annika Brumark, the apparent head of the organisation. Other arrests included a photographer, Jean-Pierre Bourgeois, who specialised in glamour shots for upmarket men's magazines and a Lebanese businessman called Nazihboudilif Al Ladi.

Investigators seized diaries, records and address books with the names of young women, and their clients, from all over the world, from Britain to Indonesia by way of the United States. Mr Al Ladi also revealed the names of other alleged clients, including Saudi and other Gulf princes. According to *Le Monde*, he told investigators that the service had been used for years by big business, especially the arms industry, as a way of sweetening contracts with Arab states.

Several witnesses spoke of the arrangement of a meeting at a "palace" in the South of France between a Gulf prince and an American actress, who earned \$1m, prompting comparisons with the film *Indecent Proposal*, in which a woman agrees to have sex with a super-rich businessman for that same amount. Rumours of such a meeting have circulated for years but they are now, according to *Le Monde*, being taken seriously by the judicial investigation.

The investigation began last October with the routine bugging and phone-tapping of a suspected, top-class prostitution ring, operating from the 16th ar-

Briton escapes draft into Foreign Legion

James Mellor

The young Briton, seized at the Channel Tunnel terminal at Folkestone by French immigration officers investigating national service dodging, was released yesterday afternoon.

Henry Tuson was arrested on Tuesday evening and detained at the La Citadelle barracks in Lille, home of the 43rd Infantry Regiment, until a medical deemed him unfit to complete his military service. At the time of his detention he had just 15 pence in his pocket.

According to a French embassy spokesman he was released just after 3pm yesterday. The 22-year-old technical translator, who works for Eurotunnel, was born in Dunkirk but moved to Britain when only three months old. He lives at present in Herne Bay, Kent and has a British passport as well as dual nationality.

French officials had argued that Mr Tuson's exemption papers, which should have been filed to them when he was 17,

had never arrived. But the manner of Mr Tuson's arrest prompted outrage from his parents, John and Brigitte, and from the local MP, Roger Gale, who represents the Thanet North constituency.

Mr Gale described the act as "kidnapping" and called for changes to the Channel Tunnel Treaty of 1987 which allowed French officers to detain Mr Tuson in Folkestone.

The treaty signed by Margaret Thatcher and François Mitterrand ceded a portion of Folkestone to the French and it was because the area was under joint Anglo-French jurisdiction that an arrest was possible.

However Mr Gale reacted furiously to the incident. "The whole situation is quite ridiculous. It is French bureaucracy gone mad."

"We have got to sort out this jurisdiction question. The concession that this part of the terminal would be viewed as French was granted in order to allow the policing of the Channel Tunnel. It was never in-

tended to allow the French police to arrest a British subject on British soil and [in effect] kidnap him."

But Laurent Lemarchand, Deputy Press Counsellor at the French Embassy in London, defended his country's actions.

"As a French citizen, Mr Tuson was expected to complete his military service or seek exemption. He was sent two letters and could have exempted himself but he failed to reply to either."

"This failure meant that he was put on the draft-dodge list in March 1994. On Tuesday evening the French police in Folkestone told him that he had to comply with his military obligations. He was not however arrested."

"At the barracks he went through an enlistment test and he was declared unfit. He was never under lock and key and he was even given some money to buy lunch."

The reason for Mr Tuson's medical unfitness will not be released. M Lemarchand added

that there had been several other such incidents of dual nationality draft-dodging in recent years although not in regard to Britain.

But Mr Tuson's father, John, 48, remained angry even after news of his son's release. "This boy only lived in France for the first three months of his life," he said.

"There has never been any suggestion in the past that he should have done military service in France just because he was born there all those years ago. As far as Henry is concerned he's English - and proud of it."

Mr Tuson's mother, Brigitte, revealed that she thought the matter of military service closed well before her son's arrest. She revealed that she had even taken legal advice on the matter.

A spokesman for the Foreign Office said: "We made our concerns known to the French Embassy as soon as the incident happened. We are pleased that the matter has been resolved."

Cup that cheers and drives you mad

Jeremy Laurance
Health Editor

Britain's favourite beverage is in the dock. The hot brown liquid drunk by over 30 million adults every day was this week blamed for turning a sensible man dotty and leading him into moral turpitude.

Major David Senior, an army officer accused of fiddling the books on ration allowances, told a court martial on Tuesday that his 20-year love affair with tea had affected his judgement. He claimed to have drunk a gallon a day and said the caffeine in the brew had left him addicted.

Specialists yesterday concluded that Major Senior was consuming almost one gram of caffeine a day, three times more than the average tea or coffee drinker and sufficient to cause symptoms, including confusion, anxiety and trembling.

Tea contains 40-50mg of caffeine in an average cup compared with 65mg in a cup of instant coffee and over 100 mg in ground coffee. Professor Vincent Marks, dean of medicine at the University of Surrey, said excessive caffeine consumption could lead to aberrant behaviour.



Going ape: A PG Tips chimpanzee. Does too much caffeine addle the brain?

"If I had been called as an expert witness in a similar case I would have advanced it as a plausible explanation. But talk of caffeine addiction is an abuse of the term. If you stop the caffeine, even at high levels, the worst you get is a headache."

Caffeine - "nature's stimulant" according to Professor Marks - is the world's most widely consumed mood-altering drug. In small quantities, it is almost certainly good for us, improving short-term memory,

boosting muscle power and increasing alertness. Tea, whether green or black, Chinese or Indian, taken with milk or without, also has protective effects against heart disease and cancer.

A group of north American Indians living in Canada who chain-drink cups of tea were found to consume caffeine at the rate of one and a half grams a day without ill effects. Tolerance varies with anxious, nervous people most strongly affected and some, such as pregnant women, slower to metabolise it, so that with repeated doses, blood levels rise.

Doctors say that for most people up to 400mg a day of caffeine is unlikely to cause side-effects. But it is easy to exceed this level. Coffee contains more caffeine than tea and can be made stronger. The drug is also present in soft drinks and chocolate.

Three cups of ground coffee (115mg of caffeine each), a can of cola (40mg) and a 4oz bar of plain chocolate (80mg) would take a person over the 400mg limit.

A study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* showed even moderate caffeine users may suffer withdrawal symptoms. The only cure is... another cuppa.

Christian Dior

news

Aitken admits to a lack of candour

Kim Sengupta

Former cabinet minister Jonathan Aitken yesterday admitted in the High Court that he had been guilty of "lack of candour" over a £3.3m Saudi investment in the television company TV-am.

Mr Aitken said he "very much regretted" that he had not disclosed the investment, by a company owned by Saudi Prince Mohammed, to fellow

TV-am directors, its chairman Peter Jay, as well as the Independent Broadcasting Authority.

Mr Aitken said he had "made mistakes" in some commercial transactions during his parliamentary career.

But he stated he was a product of the political culture of the time when outside business interests were "considered normal, and if anything encouraged".

The one-time defence procurement minister and chief secretary to the Treasury, said that "in the climate of the Nolan and Downey investigations into MPs' conduct, he would have handled certain things differently."

He told the court that outside interests "were considered quite normal and, if anything, encouraged during my first 10 years as Member of Parliament. But he went on: "We now

have a situation in which Nolan came about in 1992, and Sir Gordon Downey has recently said MPs should not have any outside interests at all."

"The climate changes. I would certainly on something like the TV-am stake, have handled it quite differently if I was coming into it in today's climate."

Mr Aitken is suing the *Guardian* newspaper and Granada Television, makers of

the *World in Action* programme, over allegations that he was in the "pocket" of powerful Saudi interests, pumped for Arabs, and took part in secret arms trading.

George Carman, QC, for the *Guardian* and Granada, accused Mr Aitken of entering into a secret deal with Prince Mohammed's company to give it control of TV-am.

In 1981, Mr Aitken, an executive with Aitken Telecom-

munications Holdings Ltd (ATHL), signed an agreement under which Al Bidad, a company owned by Prince Mohammed and in which Mr Aitken was the managing director, invested £2.1m into ATHL.

The money was used to buy into the fledgling TV-am, and over the years the Saudi company injected a total of £3.3m into the television company, the court was told.

Mr Aitken yesterday denied to Mr Justice Popplewell, who is hearing the libel action without a jury, that the Saudis were given control of TV-am in return.

He claims the agreement giving them voting rights was "null and void, and never implemented."

Asked by Mr Carman how a co-director of Al Bidad - a Dr Somait - had believed that the agreement had given the Arab

investors majority voting rights, and had indeed come into force, Mr Aitken claimed that the man was "confused both in law and language as to what had happened."

However, Mr Aitken did admit keeping the Saudi investment concealed, and he told the court: "I agree I fell short of good candid business practice, and I apologise for that."

The hearing was adjourned until today.

A hard place for a protest as invaders raise the flag on Rockall

James Mellow

Rockall is a place-name known to few outside the keen band of followers of Radio 4's *Shipping Forecast*, but since yesterday it has taken on a new role - home to three Greenpeace protesters.

The minute outcrop of rock, which measures just 110 feet in diameter and rises to a peak of 65 feet, lies almost 300 miles off the western coast of Scotland at the centre of rich, developing oil fields in the Atlantic.

The campaigners, two men and a woman, were winched down from a helicopter on to the exposed rock on Tuesday evening, their actions a protest

The trio are unlikely to suffer the same fate as fellow eco-warriors, such as those at Manchester Airport, and be prised from the rock. Yesterday the Government said that it has no intention of evicting the three from their new abode.

A spokesman for the Foreign Office told *The Independent*: "Rockall is British territory. It is part of Scotland and anyone is free to go there and can stay as long as they please."

Nigel Scott, of Western Isles Council, who since 1975 have had jurisdiction over Rockall, said: "There is no obvious reason why we would feel obliged to interfere in what is happening. We have no powers to forcibly remove them and they do have rights to be there."

In another twist to coincide with the "invasion" of Rockall, Greenpeace warned Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, that unless she acted over their claims that the Government ignored EU directives protecting the area's marine eco-system, they would seek a judicial review from the High Court. A DIT spokesman said: "If Greenpeace take court action we will deal with that."

Rockall has long been a source of territorial tensions between Britain, Ireland, Iceland and Denmark. Britain seized the bunk of volcanic rock in 1955 when Royal Marines planted the Union flag on the island. Before the arrival of the Greenpeace activists it has been uninhabited, save for the stay of a former SAS soldier, Tom McClean, who camped for 39 days on the rock. Britain is anxious to retain ownership, particularly since surveys have discovered valuable oil deposits in the Foinaven and Schiehallion fields close to the rock.

Under the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention, waters surrounding islands are the property of the controlling nation, but if the land mass is deemed uninhabitable and economically non-practicable, the land is defined as a rock and no control of nearby waters exists.

However Britain is not a signatory to this law. During recent years other countries have questioned the British definition and raised tensions in the area.

In 1992 two Irish brothers tried unsuccessfully to land on the rock and paint the Irish Tricolour on it while in 1994 a Cypriot vessel with an Icelandic skipper was arrested by a Scottish Fisheries Protection vessel.

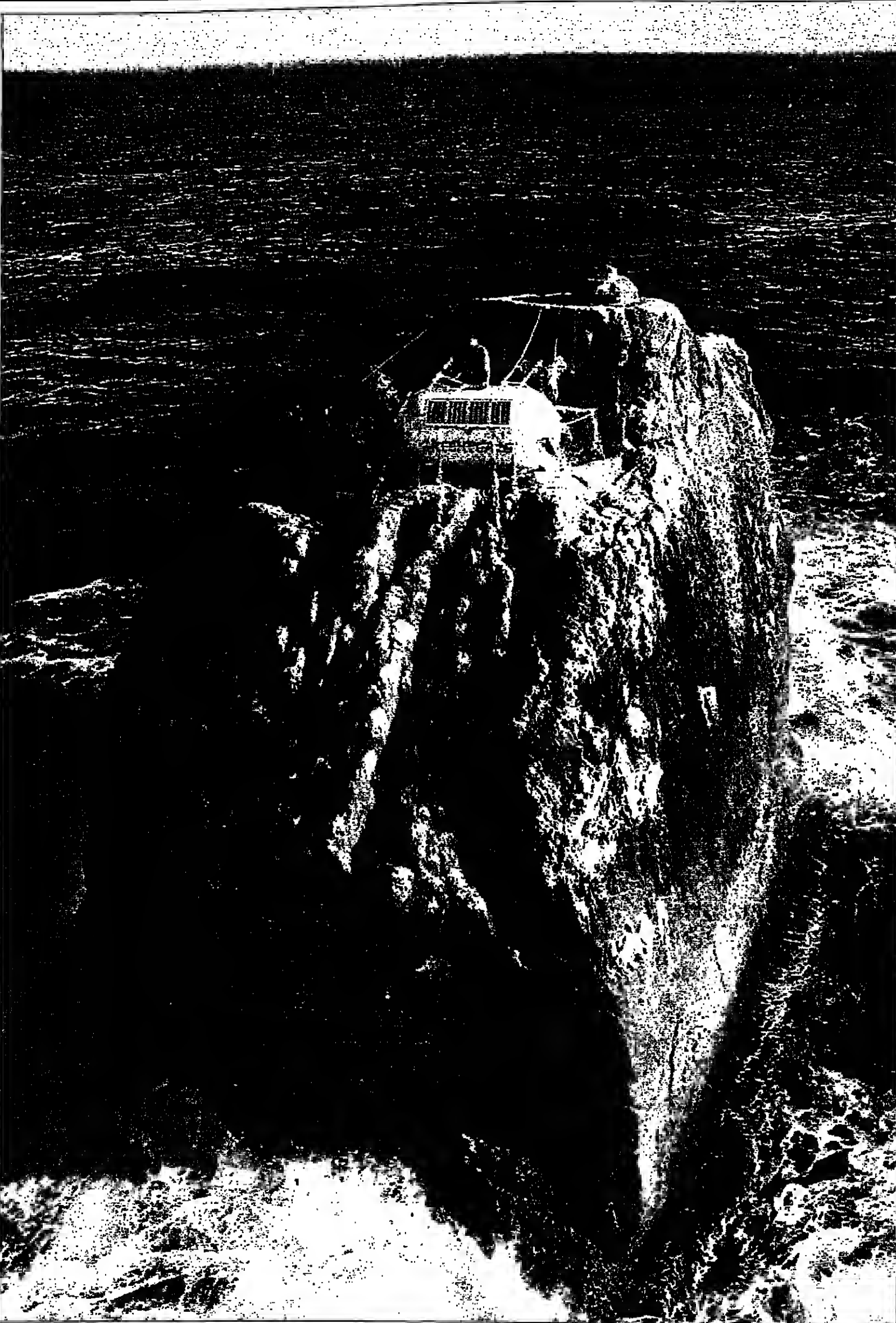
Rock legends

1. Celtic legend says Rockall is the last remnant of Skail, the Western Land of Eternal Youth submerged by the Atlantic.
2. During World War I the rock was mistaken for the coming tower of a German U-boat.
3. In a Commons debate in 1971, Mr William Ross, MP for Kilmarlock, said: "More people have landed on the moon than have landed on Rockall."
4. In 1904 a Danish ship, *Norge*, was wrecked off the island with the loss of 800 lives.
5. During the Cold War, Rockall was viewed as a security risk. It was feared the Soviet Union would monitor missile tests from there.
6. Rockall is one of the 31 areas made famous by Radio 4's *Shipping Forecast*.
7. In 1871, Lord Kennet said: "There can be no place more desolate, despairing and awful."
8. Rockall was annexed by troops from HMS *Victor* in 1956 as part of the preparations for a guided weapons training range.
9. In 1989, it was said that Rockall lay over an extinct volcano that erupted 50 million years earlier.
10. In 1955, Scotsman J Ahrach, Mackay claimed Rockall for his family. He said: "My old father claimed that island for the clan Mackay in 1846 and I now demand that the Admiralty hand it back. It's not theirs."

at extended oil exploration in the area. The trio, named as Al, Peter, and Meike, have been bolted to Rockall in a 12 foot by 6 foot survival capsule and have stated their intention of remaining there indefinitely.

A spokesman for Greenpeace said: "We have asked the UK government to stop oil exploration in the Atlantic Frontier region and when they do they can have their rock back."

Al, 32, a protester from Newhaven, Sussex, added: "By seizing Rockall we claim her seas for the planet and all its peoples. No one has the right to unleash this oil into our threatened climate."



Greenpeace members, protesting at drilling in the north Atlantic, yesterday set up a survival capsule on Rockall. Photograph: David Sims/Greenpeace

Appeal to ease beef ban quashed by EU

Katherine Butler
Strasbourg

EU scientists gave the thumbs down yesterday to Britain's appeal for a first easing of the beef ban. After weeks of deliberation the EU scientific veterinary committee returned a damning verdict on proposals tabled by the last agriculture minister Douglas Hogg for the resumption of beef exports from healthy, grass-fed UK herds.

The committee raised hopes that Northern Ireland farmers might meet the conditions for a return to trade but insisted it was up to Britain to make the case for separate treatment, something the last government repeatedly refused to do, fearing a backlash in Scotland.

The scientists expressed deep misgivings about Britain's ability to implement a watertight system for tracing healthy animals and criticised huge gaps in the information supplied by Maff. There were numerous "imprecise statements" and "omissions" according to the report, while some claims are dismissed as "simply not true".

Guarantees that information on the movements of healthy cattle is reliable, or indeed that feed being used by British farmers is free from cattle remains, are absent, the report said.

The scientists also said that uncertainty remains about the possibility of BSE being transmitted from cows to their calves. Jack Cunningham, the new Agriculture Minister is expected to come under intense pressure from Northern Ireland to go to Brussels to make the case for special treatment for Ulster, based on the province's computerised cattle-tracing system, which is unique in the UK.

Franz Fischler, the EU agriculture commissioner, has repeatedly said he would consider such a plan, given the absence of a land border between Northern Ireland and Britain. His hand will be strengthened by the revelation yesterday that the European Commission is to take four European governments to court for failing to take action to stamp out BSE.

The move appears to vindicate Mr Cunningham's claim that health precautions in other countries are weaker than in Britain. Mr Cunningham threatened to ban beef from the 10 countries which are defying scientific advice on the removal of offal.

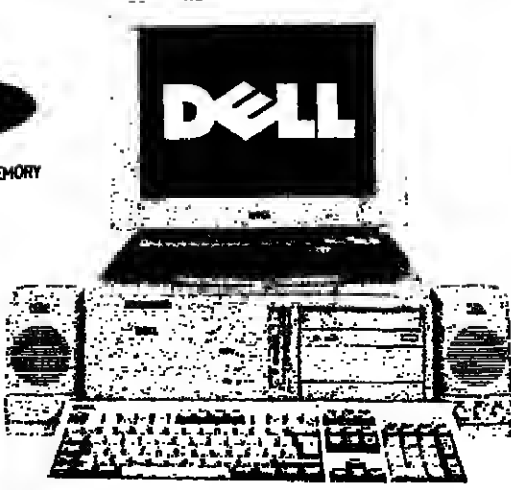
France, Germany, Sweden and Spain have officially been accused of failing to apply EU rules on rendering animal waste, which in some cases ends up as cattle feed. In a report to the European Parliament, only Britain and Luxembourg are given a clean bill of health.

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BBC chief invites inquisition from MPs

Rob Brown
Media Editor

BBC mandarins, eager to appear more publicly accountable and to counter suspicions harboured by ministers that they have succumbed to commercialism, announced yesterday that they are prepared to face an annual grilling in Parliament.

Sir Christopher Bland, the chairman of the BBC, invited the Select Committee on National Heritage to quiz him and his senior colleagues each autumn when the corporation publishes its annual report.

Sir Christopher also stressed that public-service values remain at the heart of the BBC as it approaches its 75th anniversary in October. This was obviously a reply to Chris Smith, the National Heritage Secretary, who has voiced concern about creeping commercialism.

Delivering a lecture to the Royal Television Society, Sir Christopher said the BBC's unique form of funding – the licence fee – conferred a special responsibility to service all sections of the community and preserve Britain's public service ecology.

On the question of accountability, he said: "It seems to me that the annual report might provide a useful and precise agenda for an autumn appearance by the BBC in front of the select committee, and that the resultant discussions might be usefully focused and constructive as a result."

The Consumers' Association warned yesterday that the BBC could find it increasingly difficult to defend the licence fee as the digital revolution unfolds and its own commercial activities expand.

In a report, the watchdog body called for a single regulator for the whole telecommunications sector, including

television, radio, print media, telephone companies and the Post Office.

Benet Middleton, a senior policy researcher with the association, said the BBC's commercial interests were not subject to any external scrutiny beyond Parliament.

The BBC's governors, he pointed out, "essentially police themselves".

A spokeswoman for the Department of National Heritage said yesterday that the Government has no plans to alter the way the BBC is regulated. But Labour did issue a pledge in its election manifesto to set up some type of "Ofcom" body along the lines of the other watchdogs. "It is something that the Government is considering in terms of how to take it forward," she said.

Steven Barnett, senior lecturer in communications at the University of Westminster and a leading authority on the politics of broadcasting, said: "Accountability has become the big buzzword in debates about the future of the BBC, but different people mean different things when they talk about this."

He believes there should be a more democratic and open way of appointing and appraising the governors, but he is opposed to a single regulator, posing the critical question: "Who would guard the guards?"

■ Euro-MPs have approved new rules obliging television broadcasters to ensure that at least 51 per cent of their output is of European origin "wherever practicable".

The directive, designed to stem a flood-tide of American shows and films, was hailed as a triumph by Labour MEP and media spokeswoman Carole Tongue, who predicted thousands of new jobs in the European television industry.



Then and now: Sixties 'Coronation Street' icons Ena Sharples and Hilda Ogden (left) contrast with steamy Nineties' characters Kevin Webster and Nathalie Horrocks

Ena would never have approved

Paul McCann
Media Correspondent

The man the tabloids have dubbed the mad axe murderer of *Coronation Street* pledged yesterday that he was going to stop killing off the TV soap's characters, only to see another long-serving actor resign because of changes to the show.

Brian Park, who on his first day as producer of *Coronation Street* six months ago cut the wimpy Derek Wilton character from the show, has now seen 10 characters either jump or be pushed from the show.

The latest casualty was actor Bill Waddington, 81, who played the eternally grumpy Percy Sugden. Mr Waddington pleaded the tabloids, and probably boosted ratings, yesterday by claiming he was leaving because the show now contained too much sex.

"Hand on heart, there will be no more axings for at least a year," Mr Park said yesterday before Mr Waddington's announcement. "It is difficult to tell people that you are not renewing their contract but it is not personal."

The reason for the butchery, which has also seen the characters Mavis Wilton, Don Brennan and Andy McDonald wiped

from the credits, has been ITV's decision to drag *Coronation Street* into the 1990s.

In recent months, the show has been level-pegging with its BBC rival *EastEnders*, but in the long term the show's audience is in decline. It also suffers from an ageing audience – 40 per cent of its regular viewers are over 55 – which is a turn-off for advertisers and means its audience is dying off.

There was also a feeling that

the show had been fatally weakened by losing three important characters – barmails Bet Gilroy and Raquel, and Reg Holdsworth.

Last November, when *Coronation Street* trailed *EastEnders* by a million viewers for the first showing and by five million when *EastEnders* Sunday omnibus was taken into account, the tabloids used the five million figure to justify a series of "Corrie in decline" stories.

Now that something has been done about that supposed decline, they are branding Mr Park the "assassin of the Street".

"I was brought in to bring the show into the next millennium and to secure our status as number one," Mr Park told the *Daily Mirror* yesterday, underneath a picture of Freddy Krueger, the murderer from the *Nightmare on Elm Street* films.

However, he said that there would be a limit to the changes

in plot: "Emily Bishop will not be shooting up smack, but the Street has been in stasis for too long."

As well as extra sex, Mr Park has tinkered with the balance between *Coronation Street*'s comedic storylines and its hard drama plots so that there is more drama – only in the early 1990s did *Coronation Street* move from Granada's light entertainment department to its drama division.

He also plans to copy *EastEnders* strategy of milking storylines for longer.

Next month sees the introduction of the first major new family to the street for years – the Battersbys, dubbed the neighbours from hell but who crucially include some more young characters to appeal to younger viewers.

There are also plans to introduce the Street's first Asian family later in the year.

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More trouble at the opera

Jojo Moyes

Britain's two main opera houses are in crisis. It emerged yesterday as an inquiry was launched into the Arts Council's relationship with the Royal Opera House, and the general director of the English National Opera revealed he had tried to resign over budget cuts.

The future of both organisations was said to be in question because of financial and operational pressures. The Royal Opera House has been plagued with problems in its £214m refurbishment.

Launching the inquiry, Chris Smith, the Heritage Secretary said that with £78m of lottery money involved he wanted to be sure the scheme was carried out "with probity".

The news came after Arts Council secretary general Mary Allen's appointment last month as chief executive of the Royal Opera House. She replaced Genista McIntosh, who resigned only 18 weeks into the job, apparently through ill health.

Arts Council chiefs were unhappy Ms McIntosh was replaced without the post being advertised. They asked Ms Allen to leave her Arts Council job immediately to avoid any implication of a clash in responsibilities.

The ROH is an independent body, but because of its level of public funding the Arts Council has an interest in the way it is run.

Lord Gowrie, who stands with the former camp, has publicly described the ROH's plans for the Royal Opera and the Royal Ballet during redevelopment as "a shambles".

Meanwhile Dennis Marks, the ENO's general director, revealed that he had submitted his resignation in March, after being asked to implement cost-cutting to reduce the ENO's £4m deficit.

The ENO is said to be in financial trouble, despite an £11.9m Arts Council grant, and has applied for £3m of emergency lottery money from the Arts Council.



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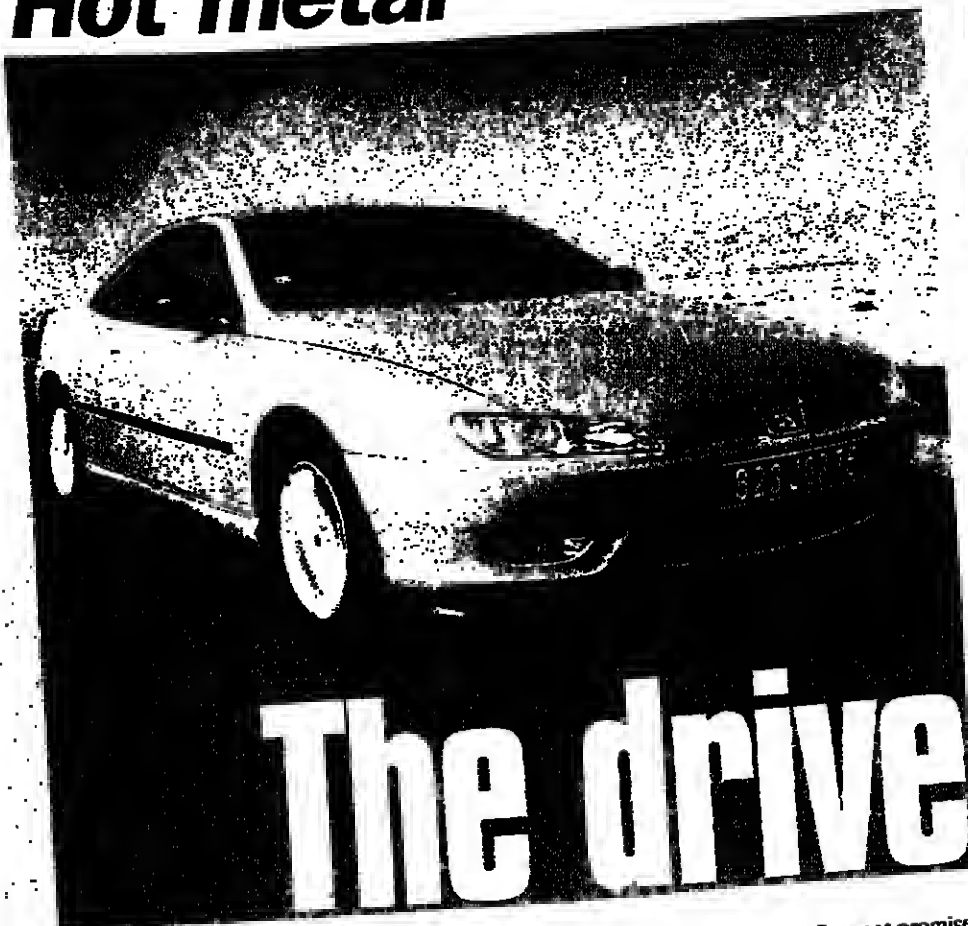
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You may not be able to test drive one yet, but take our word for it: anything that looks this good and is based on the 406 chassis is never going to be anything other than the drive of your life.

If you're not prepared to follow our advice now, then settle back and read on. Our exclusive first drive of the French stunner will con-

firm whether or not the new Peugeot promises to leave the rest of the coupé crowd in its slipstream when it arrives on these shores in June.

At this point, it wouldn't be unreasonable to expect a snag concerning the price. But before crossing the Coupé off your 'must-have' list, take note: this desirable machine can be yours for less than \$20,000. As Peugeot points out, this sort of pricing won't just tempt current coupé customers, but also ambitious executives and go-get-em types who are fed up with their hi-spec saloons and fancy a change.

Your \$19,480 will buy the entry-level 2.0-litre, four-cylinder model, which to the eye isn't that different from the more expensive \$25,780, 3.0-litre, V6 SE. Both have full head-turning potential, thanks to that stunning body designed by Pininfarina.

We've eagerly awaited many a new car launch, but this is one we've looked forward to with terrific anticipation. Just the thought of getting behind the wheel had us going weak at the knees.

So when we finally got the opportunity to take the 406 Coupé for a spin, we simply had to go the whole hog and sample arguably the most-wanted model, the fiery V6-equipped version.

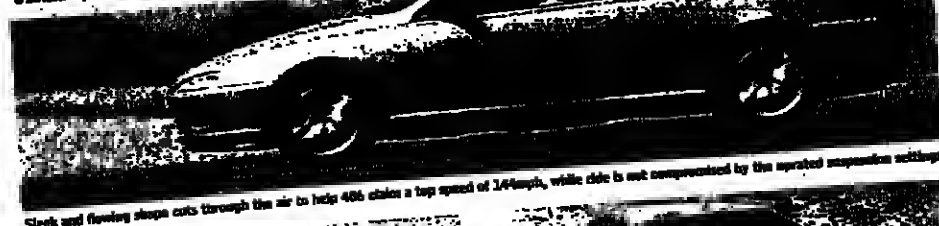
Visually it could almost be a baby Ferrari, which shouldn't come as any surprise since the Pininfarina design house was also responsible for penning the range-topping Prancing Horse, the 456 GT. Furthermore, the new Peugeot doesn't share any body panels with the current 406 saloon, and ends up 70mm longer.

No matter where you stand and from what angle you view it, the Peugeot is a delight to behold. Indeed, we'd hedge our bets that it will go down as a future classic of the company's range.

Swing open the long, frameless doors, slip yourself into the leather-clad cabin and you'll quickly be nodding in approval. The dashboard

At a glance

- Pininfarina-designed 406 Coupé goes on sale in June.
- Prices range from \$19,480 for 2.0 to \$25,780 for 3.0.
- The 3.0-litre V6 shown here does 0-100mph in 6 seconds.
- Leather equipment and top quality make it 406V heater.



Deployment on top-spec V6 includes climate control and front and side airbags.

Pininfarina styling is unmistakable, with subtle flared wheel arches and a rear spoiler.



Unfortunately, only a limited number of these beauties will come to UK.



Ample room for two adults in the rear - essential for a coupé.



Electrically-adjustable front seats come with lap-shoulder seatbelts.

may follow the well-proven 406 formula, with a solid feel and fuss-free layout, but a little more attention reveals a few loving touches here and there which give the Coupé a special feel compared to its saloon counterpart.

A graphite finish around the air vents and gearstick plus fetching chrome-ringed dials lend things up, while lavish leather and big Recaro bucket seats - standard on the V6 - certainly make you feel your \$25,780 is money well spent.

Throw in air-conditioning, a superb 10-speaker stereo and a fully adjustable electric front seat and it's obvious this Peugeot is treading un-comfortably heavily on BMW's toes.

It may be the most lusted-after coupé, but that doesn't stop it from being a practical proposition too. Peugeot says it's a full four-seater, and it's not fibbing. Pull a tab on the outside of the front seat and the chair slides forward electrically, allowing easy access to the rear. Tip the seat back into place and it returns to its original setting. Even so, there's plenty of legroom in the back and two adults will be able to sit in relative comfort over a long distance.

Another pleasant surprise comes when you lift the boot lid. This is one coupé which doesn't force you to compromise your luggage load every time you go away.

It's from the driver's seat that all the action takes place, though. Fire up Peugeot's latest 3.0-litre V6 engine, developed in conjunction with Citroën and Renault, and as it settles to a solid growl you know you're in for a treat.

With 191bhp on tap at 5,500rpm, and 267Nm of torque at 4,000rpm, the Coupé is easily quick enough. It sprints up through its five-speed manual gearbox on the way to 60mph in eight seconds, and heading on towards a claimed 144mph top speed with ease.

It sounds the part as you go, too, with a creamy-smooth engine note that will have you purposely changing down a gear to emphasise the purr. You don't need to keep shifting down the box to overtake, though, as the engine has plenty of pulling power that sees it haul past slower traffic with minimal fuss.

Impressive

With a lowered ride height and slightly firmer suspension settings, you might expect comfort to suffer. But, as with the 406 saloon, the ride is impressive, with excellent body control and good bump absorption. There's still a fair amount of roll through the corners, but this never spoils things and, as ever, the 406 Coupé is a delight to drive hard.

That's especially true when you back it all up with the new braking system, developed in conjunction with Brembo. The reassuring-feeling pedal activates outstanding stopping power.

All in all, the new 406 Coupé is an absolute stunner. It looks divine, drives superbly and has quality and comfort levels to worry the likes of BMW.

Like we said, grab that chequebook, go to your dealer and get ready for the drive of your life.

James Mills



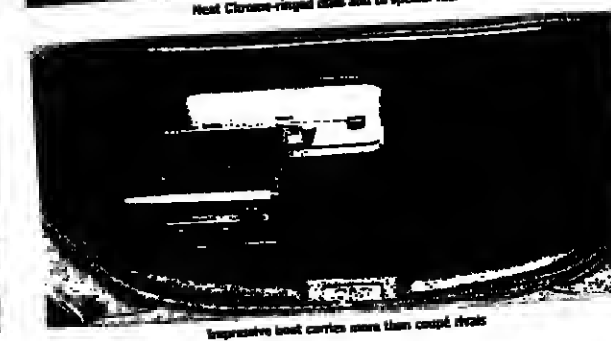
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British artist's Holocaust memorial will not go ahead

David Lister
Venice

The British artist Rachel Whiteread disclosed last night that the Holocaust memorial she has designed for Vienna may never be installed.

The 34-year-old former Turner Prize-winner said that a web of political in-fighting had stalled the project.

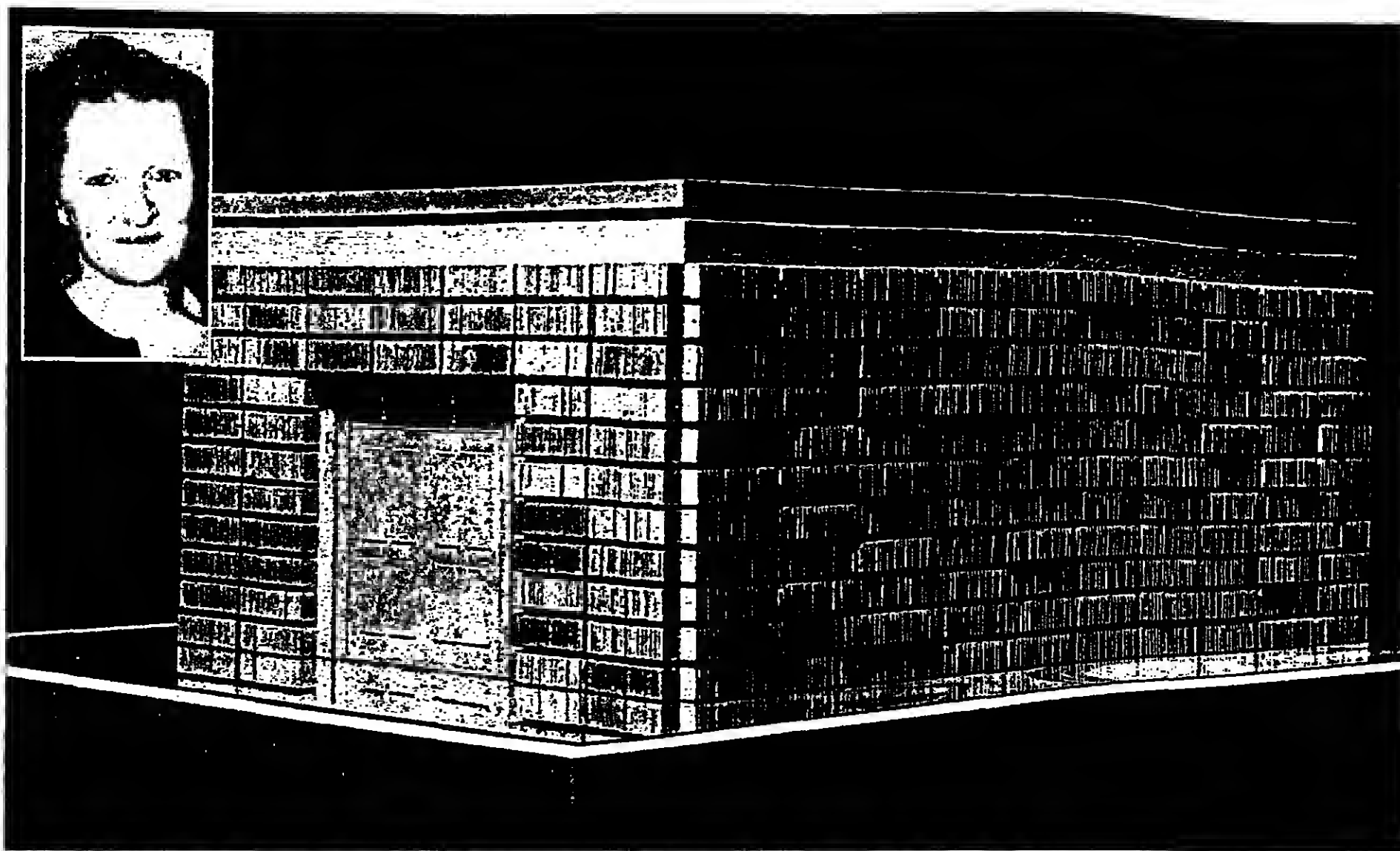
Some politicians in Austria did not want a Holocaust memorial. Others opposed Ms Whiteread because she is not Jewish. Others said the metaphor of the piece – a concrete cast of a library of books – ignored working-class victims and concentrated only on in-

tellectuals. Others wanted the piece moved away from the proposed site in the old Jewish ghetto of Vienna.

Speaking at the Venice Biennale, Ms Whiteread told *The Independent* last night: "It is all of these things. I am very angry. I cannot now see it going ahead. It is a bitter disappointment."

Her disclosure threatened to take the gloss off the biggest night of her career as she became the first woman to represent Britain with a solo show at the Biennale.

She said that winning an international competition to design Austria's Holocaust memorial had been rendered all but worthless.



Future uncertain: The design for Vienna's Holocaust memorial, by the British artist and Turner Prize-winner, Rachel Whiteread (inset)

She has nearly finished the installation, a concrete cast of a ghostly library representing Hitler's attempted destruction of a people and its culture. It was to be placed in the Judenplatz in Vienna's old Jewish ghetto, and was supposed to open last year, then this year, and then next June.

Ms Whiteread said last night: "No one from Austria has spoken to me for six months. I absolutely refuse to move the piece to another site. It has to be site-specific. You cannot design by consensus."

Her main installation at the Biennale, *Ten Tables* implying endless bureaucratic meetings, shaped in what one critic termed a "Kafkaesque layout", was a poignant comment on the last two years.

One room of the British Pavilion at the Biennale contains a rubber and polystyrene cast of a bath; in another is a cast from a mortuary slab. The main room contains plaster casts of 10 tables arranged in a rectangle. A separate gallery has a plaster cast of a wall of bookshelves.

Whiteread was the talk of the Biennale last night as the British Council threw a reception in her honour and international gallery directors came to see her work.

Imponderable to some, but conjuring memory and symbolism to others, the Whiteread show also hinted at a deeper controversy affecting her and the world of arts and politics.

Other rooms in the British Pavilion last night demonstrated her hypnotic sense of space, light and the effects of water. In a gallery overlooking one of Venice's canals she placed nine slabs of translucent green resin cast from floorboards, the light reflecting off the canal and giving the work a sense of liquidity.

Whiteread is one of the most controversial and challenging sculptors of her generation, exciting both in admiration and irritation. On the night she won the £20,000 Turner Prize in 1993 she also found herself being presented with a £40,000 award for the "Worse Body Of Work Of The Year" at the gates of the Tate Gallery by the K Foundation, a group of protesters led by some affluent former pop stars. She gave the money to charity.

12-year-old Manx girl is spared return to island jail

Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

The 12-year-old girl at the centre of the child-jailing furore on the Isle of Man admitted in court yesterday to seven assaults and five cases of criminal damage, but escaped further imprisonment after her lawyer pleaded for understanding.

The girl, who cannot be named for legal reasons, was brought to the juvenile court in Douglas by two prison officers.

She sat in court with her long blonde hair in a pony tail, next to her case worker, rushing to chat and hug her aunt and mother during breaks in the proceedings.

She was given a conditional discharge yesterday and was returned to the island's children's home where she is under 24-hour supervision from two

social workers. The island's social services are expected to try and find a secure establishment on the mainland where she can receive counselling.

The disclosure that the girl spent seven days in a juvenile annex at the island's only prison has caused outrage. Under Manx law, children as young as 10 can be jailed at Victoria Road prison in Douglas.

The mother of the 13-year-old, who is subject to a care order, said in court that it was "disgraceful" her daughter had been locked in the prison and said she was "messed up".

Her daughter admitted to a series of offences mostly against staff at the children's home between March and June. They included kicking a worker in the mouth and shins causing bleeding and bruising, and kicking another person in the stomach.

There were also several incidents of assaulting staff, in which she spat, swore and hit out, as they tried to control her.

Her case worker, Rose Banell, said the girl had been in care for almost two years and there had been two failed attempts to place her with foster parents.

Her advocate, Terence McDonald, argued: "This is a child who we all accept has difficulties and having a [criminal] record is not going to help her go into the world."

He added: "This is a chapter that is going to live with her for the rest of her life."

Chairman of the Bench, Malcolm Hartley, said that although the offences were "severe", in view of "circumstances" he had decided to give her a discharge on the condition she did not re-offend again in the next 12 months. He told her: "We want you to have a long and happy life but it requires your co-operation."

Outside court, Mr McDonald said: "I feel recent events have moved the authorities to think very hard about funding alternative accommodation for these children other than sending them to prison."

In another case, the court chairman reprimanded police for charging a 15-year-old boy with drinking a bottle of lager in public. Mr Hartley said the boy, who had no previous record of offences and was not drunk, should have been cautioned.

The case follows criticism of the Isle of Man police for taking a gung-ho attitude to bringing charges, particularly against juveniles. Unlike in Britain, the Manx police decide whether to bring a charge.

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BUS 46

politics

Dobson fights over free prescriptions

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Frank Dobson, the Secretary of State for Health, made it clear that cuts in free NHS prescriptions for pensioners would be "over my dead body", in spite of Treasury pressure for a comprehensive review of all government spending.

Announcing a year-long review yesterday in the Commons, Alistair Darling, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, refused to rule out cuts in free prescriptions when he was challenged by the left-wing Labour

MP Dennis Skinner over reports which alarmed pensioners' groups including Age Concern.

Mr Darling said: "We have made it clear all aspects have to be examined. It would be quite wrong to exclude problems in relation to prescription charges where there are anomalies, where one illness is recognised for a free prescription and other are not. The Secretary of State for Health will be looking at that."

However, Mr Dobson made it clear earlier that while he would carry out the wide-ranging review demanded by the

Treasury, cuts in free prescriptions to pensioners would be politically unacceptable. He told officials it would only go through "over my dead body".

Underlining the thoroughness of the review, ministers have been ordered to look at selling off public assets which are not needed with a view to reallocating the sums raised to public spending where it is "needed most".

The Department of Health is one of the Whitehall ministries which is being forced to "think the unthinkable" by Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, in the search for

ways to improve services without increasing budgets.

Other cash-raising ideas being looked at include road pricing and road tolls which could raise revenue and cut traffic in towns, helping to meet the tough anti-pollution targets set by John Prescott, the Secretary of State for Environment and Transport.

Hotel charges could be introduced in hospitals to raise money from NHS patients who wish to pay for better private-style rooms, with more private facilities. Hospitals already charge for providing private

televisions and telephones to patients.

The review will look at the possibility of raising more money through charges for visiting art galleries and museums.

Library charges could be included in the year-long review, and new taxes on town-centre car parks could be studied to persuade more commuters to use public transport.

Mr Darling said: "The review will be thorough and far-reaching. All departments and all ministers will be involved. It will take 12 months to complete and its conclusions will inform a new

set of public spending plans for the rest of this Parliament. It will take the long-term view."

Kenneth Clarke, the former chancellor, said the review was "all smoke and mirrors" to allow the Government to raise spending and taxes.

Alan Simpson, secretary of the left-wing Campaign Group of Labour MPs, said he would welcome a hypothecated tax for the NHS, but he signalled there would be unrest in the party if more radical charges were introduced for public services.

"Charging is the least efficient way to raise taxes," he said. "I

would urge Gordon Brown to think about introducing three measures in his Budget: lift the ceiling on National Insurance contributions; double National Insurance levels for those earning over £100,000 a year; and change employers' National Insurance Contributions to a fixed percentage of gross profits."

"There is the central dilemma facing the Labour government and there are contradictions in our policies which we are going to have to face up to sooner or later. If we want a flexible workforce, we will have to restore a universally-based welfare."

Prescott orders ministry merger

Randeep Ramesh and
Nicholas Schoon

The fiefdom of John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, came into view yesterday when the Government announced that the Department of Transport and the Department of Environment would merge.

Known from next Monday as the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, the move reflects Mr Prescott's desire for civil servants in the two sections to work more closely together.

The first victim of the new set-up is, as predicted by *The Independent* last week, Sir Patrick Brown, Permanent Secretary at the Department of Transport.

Ministers decided the new "superministry" run by the Deputy Prime Minister required only one top manager. The new position is likely to be filled by Andrew Turnbull, Permanent Secretary at the Department of the Environment.

The Department of Transport came into being in 1976 as a separate ministry. The Conservatives beefed up its remit in the Eighties by adding to it shipping and aviation from Trade and Industry.

Many observers say the transport ministry was always likely to be swallowed up by other departments. With most of its industries - rail, shipping and aviation - now in the private sector, ministers looking for more savings would have found the DoT at the top of their list.

The new super-department began consulting on its plans for Regional Development Agencies yesterday.

These are intended to boost development and competitiveness, attract investment and help small businesses in the English regions when they start operating in 1999.

In a slim consultation paper, the department says it wanted views on whether the agencies should be involved in marketing the region, training people, giving grants and loans to businesses, purchasing derelict land and readying it for development and, controversially, planning and even building transport infrastructure, including roads.

Leading article, page 21

Ruddock becomes the minister for women



Joan Ruddock: 'Has a strong record on women's issues and will play a key role in our work,' said her new boss Harriet Harman Photograph: John Voos

Tony Blair has appointed a Minister for Women, it was announced yesterday, reversing a decision made just weeks ago that Harriet Harman should do the job in addition to her duties as Secretary of State for Social Security, writes Fran Abrams.

Although Ms Harman will still be in charge of women's issues, she will be supported by Joan Ruddock, the member for Lewisham Deptford.

However, it emerged that she will be working for free as she will not draw her ministerial

salary. The limit for the number of ministers on the payroll has been reached.

The Department of Social Security already has a special unit for women and its head is to chair a ministerial committee on the issue. She will also see all

Cabinet committee papers to assess their impact on women.

Ms Harman's staff have argued that her strong commitment to women's issues would ensure that they remained high on the agenda.

Ms Ruddock was an envi-

ronment spokeswoman in opposition, but had not been given a government job following the election. Ms Harman said: "Joan has a strong record on women's issues. She will play a key role in our work."

Polly Toynbee, page 23

PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTIONS
THE LEADERS TACKLE BLAIRMichael
Heseltine

The current Tory deputy leader, standing in for an absent Major, tried to catch Blair out in a Labour election pledge that children on assisted places should be able to study abroad. Blair said discretion was essential to prevent possible fraud.

Paddy
Ashdown

Ashdown asked Blair to promise that Labour would stick to the expenditure levels planned for the Conservatives for the next two years. When Blair did so, Ashdown asked whether it was not "dodgy" that the Government had committed itself not to transfer savings made in one department to be spent in another if they were to do that, as Blair could benefit. Blair dismissed the point as "not very serious".

Verdict: Ashdown wins

THEMES OF THE DAY

- Milkenhall and Lakenheath Airbases (Gordon Spring, C. West Suffolk)
- The Conservative leadership contest (Martin Linton, Lincs, Rutland)
- The Private Finance Initiative (Ian Pearson, Lincs, Rutland)
- Scottish devolution and the Claim of Right (John Hume, Lincs, Rutland)
- Land ownership rules in Scotland (Margaret Ewing, Lincs, Rutland)

GOOD DAY **BAD DAY**

GOOD DAY **BAD DAY**

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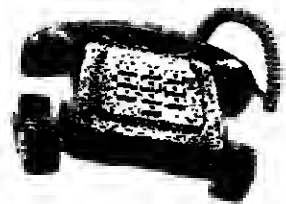
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news

Cambridge dons fight to protect green outlook

Clare Garner

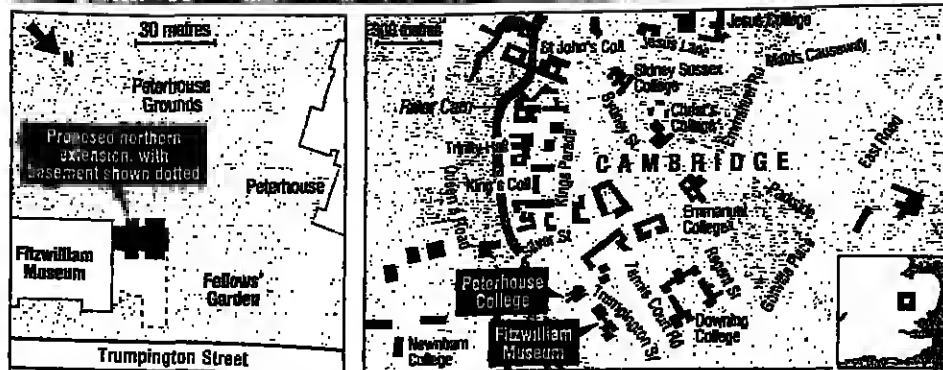
It's the Cambridge equivalent of "Not In Our Back Yard". Fellow dons at the University's oldest college, Peterhouse, are at war with their next-door neighbours in the Fitzwilliam Museum, whose proposed extension would, they claim, destroy their view.

The 40-odd academics believe that if the £11m extension goes ahead, their time-honoured afternoons spent reading and taking tea in the Fellows' Garden would never be the same again. The "big block" would be "intrusive", would "overpower" the garden and obscure the view.

The Master of Peterhouse, Sir John Meurig Thomas, and the governing body have lodged protests against the plans for the northern extension, which is set back 1.5 metres from the wall which divides the two institutions. More than 3,300 dons and senior administrators will be balloted on the issue next month.

Professor Christopher Calladine, the senior fellow of Peterhouse, will be voicing his objections. "Everyone with a garden and a neighbour is likely to object to the neighbour's building coming right up to the wall, when it previously didn't," he said.

"At the moment, if we stand in the Fellows' Garden, we see the high block of the museum in the distance, about 60ft beyond



the wall. The new proposed northern extension will bring the northern extremity of the museum right up to practically the wall. It will be a big block of building overshadowing our garden."

However, Professor Calladine insisted that Peterhouse's main objection was a "moral" one. The land on which the mu-

seum is built was originally sold to the university by Peterhouse in three stages. Building on the north side was "against the spirit" of the last sale in 1915. The availability of land to the south of the museum also meant there was an alternative site.

The extension would involve cutting into the northern wall of

the building designed by George Basevi, a protégé of Sir John Soane, in 1834, with a giant classical-style portico commanding its east-facing entrance.

David Watkin, an architectural historian and fellow of Peterhouse, said: "It is a Grade One listed building. It deserves to be respected, not mutilated."

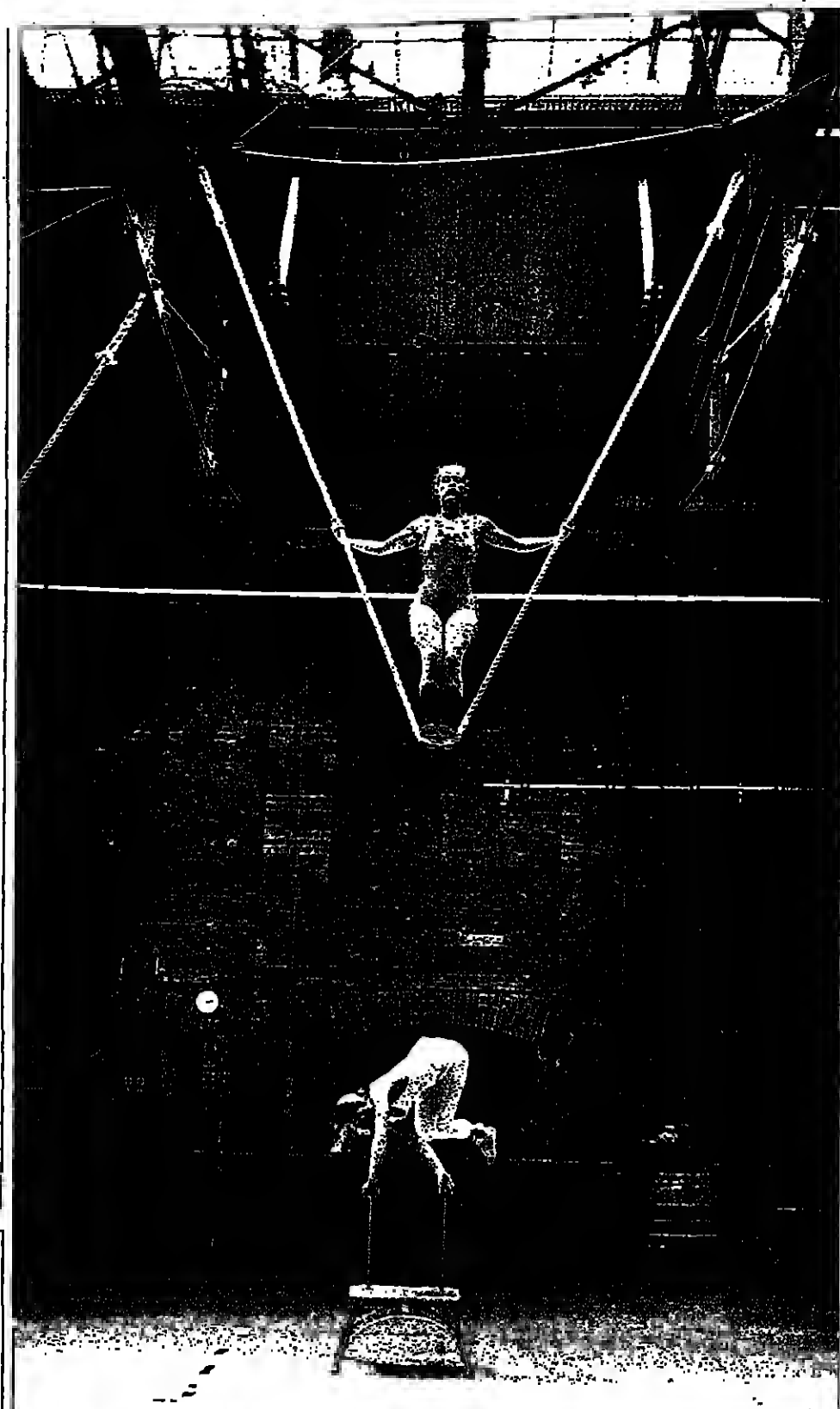
Duncan Robinson, director of the Fitzwilliam Museum, is keen that the museum should provide the public with the services of a "late-20th century museum."

He believes that Peterhouse's objections are garden-based. "The first problem the college has is that they don't want to look at it," he said. "From there they are going on, quite naturally, to saying that extending a Grade One listed building is a very sensitive issue and we should not be adding to the original building."

Caroline Elam, editor of the *Burlington Magazine*, the monthly art history journal, and member of the Fitzwilliam syndicate, believes that even Basevi would have been in favour of the extension.

"Basevi himself was well aware that additions to north and to south of the Fitzwilliam might prove desirable, as his drawing of 29 June 1836 makes clear," she wrote to the University Vice-Chancellor.

She went on to put her case: "The proposed northern extension in its modified form is modest in scale and deliberately reticent in character... The architect, John Miller, is particularly well-known for his sensitivity to the needs of historic buildings: his work at the Whitechapel Art Gallery not only won prizes, but, perhaps more importantly, continues to look good and function well."



Balancing act: Acrobats at the launch of the Metier organisation, which offers nationally recognised qualifications for creative people. Photograph: Geraint Lewis

Bodysurfing fish put quotas in their plaice

Charles Arthur
Science Editor

Attempts to set European fishing quotas could face a new problem: the discovery that plaice like bodysurfing.

A new electronic tagging system has discovered that fish can swim enormous distances around the North Sea by using undersea currents. These off-shore currents, created by the movement of the tides, help fish to travel up to 10 times further than has been thought.

Standard tagging systems attach a plastic tag to a fish and then record where the fish is subsequently caught. On this basis, plaice might appear to move just 55 miles (88km) in 56 days.

But an electronic tag, developed by the Government's Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science, in Lowestoft, discovered that during that period, the fish actually ranged up and down the east coast of Britain, covering a total distance of 900km.

This finding has important implications for attempts to set quotas to preserve fish stocks. Julian Metcalfe, the scientist who led the research, said: "It does mean if you wanted to close areas from fishing, to protect the stocks, you would also have to close areas around it."

Cod and other species take advantage of the tidal drift, say the scientists, whose work is reported today in the science

journal *Nature*: "When tidal stream are fast, individual fish can move up to 20km per day."

The idea of closing areas has been mooted as a method of managing cod stocks in the Atlantic, following a collapse in numbers through over-fishing.

The plaice move by swimming up into the tidal stream, which moves north or south, changing direction every six hours with the rise and fall of the tide around the British coast. By moving in and out of the stream, they can reach their spawning grounds in the North Sea and in the east of the Channel, and the feeding grounds in between, using less energy than if they were swimming in still water.

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New bid to tackle corrupt police

Patricia Wynn Davies

Police officers in elite squads should be moved around frequently to stop them being tempted into corruption, the Government will be told today.

The Police Complaints Authority, which deals with allegations of police malpractice, will use its first meeting with the Home Office today to urge a shake-up of specialist crime units in England and Wales to prevent "endemic corruption".

Peter Moorhouse, chairman of the PCA, is also expected to call during discussions with Alun Michael, the Home Office minister, for officers suspected of falsifying evidence or taking bribes to be subject to the same kind of disciplinary procedures as other workers, and for an end to officers evading punishment by retiring on health grounds.

Mr Moorhouse believes that specially selected officers serving in the country's six regional crime squads should be regularly rotated to prevent them forming close bonds with local criminals. The concerns come in the wake of last month's criticism of the South East Regional Crime Squad, when a judge threatened 20 detectives with contempt of court proceedings after a drugs case collapsed because evidence had been destroyed.

Mr Moorhouse said yesterday that the failure to rotate officers led to "endemic corruption - corruption of evidence or financial corruption".

An authority spokesman said yesterday: "The question of how long officers spend in these squads has been on the agenda

since November 1991 when we produced a report on the West Midlands Serious Crime Squad. Yet the debate still continues."

The Association of Chief Police Officers (Acpo) insisted that ethical and management standards in the police service were higher than ever and that deployment of officers must remain a matter for individual chief officers. Paul Whitthouse, Chief Constable of Sussex and vice-chairman of Acpo's personnel and training committee, agreed that in "high pressure" situations there was always potential for corruption, but said such behaviour was "very much the exception, not the norm".

Acpo is in agreement, however, with Mr Moorhouse's call for a change in the standard of proof needed to discipline corrupt officers. At present, a discipline case must be proved "beyond reasonable doubt", the standard required in criminal trials. Both the complaints authority and Acpo believe that disciplinary hearings should be judged on a balance of probabilities - the standard practice in Scottish police forces.

The Police Federation, the union for officers up to the rank of inspector, said it would continue to campaign against any change in the burden of proof. Fred Broughton, the chairman, said: "We have to deal with professional criminals that tactically will make allegations against police... These matters have to be properly investigated. But they have to be tested to make sure that the allegations are substantiated. That's all we ask, that there's a fair, just system."



Figure of fun: A rare 1930s, German-made tin toy of Mickey and Minnie Mouse to be sold by Phillips in London on Tuesday. The toy, expected to fetch up to £10,000, was banned by the Nazis, who switched production to more Teutonic, military-style toys. Photograph: Andrew Buurman

Guard denies suicide claims

Kathy Marks

A Securicor guard who saw a burglary suspect hanging in his cell denied yesterday that she had claimed he was faking a suicide attempt.

Camille Elliott-Kamara told an inquest in Hammersmith, west London, that the Securicor staff on duty in the cells at Brentford Magistrates' Court had treated the incident as an emergency and reacted swiftly.

Peter Austin, 30, died at the courthouse on 29 January this year while awaiting a bail hearing. The inquest was told yesterday by counsel for Securicor that the firm had not held an inquiry into his death.

Miss Elliott-Kamara rejected the version of events given by Mr Austin's barrister, Stuart Armstrong, who alleged that guards saw him hanging but did not enter his cell for 10 minutes. She denied having a lengthy discussion with Mr Armstrong about whether he was feigning suicide: "I do recall saying to him something to the effect that we've got to be sure that he's not just hanging in there."

The inquest heard that although Mr Austin's conduct in the cells suggested that he was in a disturbed state, he was not placed on a special watch until after he was cut down. By then, according to evidence from the pathologist, he was already dead, although Securicor guards had pronounced him fit and left him lying on the floor in the recovery position.

Patrick O'Connor QC, counsel for Mr Austin's family, said Miss Elliott-Kamara's account was in profound conflict with Mr Armstrong's. "Someone is not telling the truth here and it's you," he said. She said that was not the case. Mr O'Connor suggested that she had insisted repeatedly that Mr Austin was playing a trick. "You were fully aware of the dangers of such an incident and you recklessly disregarded them," he said. Miss Elliott-Kamara disagreed with that suggestion. The case continues today.

Shorter holidays proposed for teachers

Judith Judd
Education Editor

Teachers would be given shorter holidays and fewer bureaucratic tasks under a proposal put forward at a meeting of a left-wing think-tank yesterday.

The suggestion comes at a time when the Government is considering ways to raise standards by restructuring the profession and improving morale.

Under the plan, suggested at a seminar organised by the Fabian Society, teachers' holidays would be cut to between four and six weeks a year.

They would be required to teach on Saturday mornings, after school and at summer schools of the type proposed last week by the Government which will help improve literacy through two-week programmes during the holidays.

In return, there would be a big reduction in the administrative tasks teachers had to carry out and support staff would ensure school equipment, such as photocopiers, was functioning properly. The aim would be to maximise the time teachers spend actually teaching.

The meeting was attended by teachers, local authority officials, academics and politicians. Teachers reacted angrily to

the suggestion of shorter holidays. Doug McAvoy, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said: "Teachers are already working in excess of 50 hours a week."

"That is why so many of them are suffering from stress and leaving the profession. We would oppose any attempt to change the working week or the working year."

He said only two weeks ago

David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, had announced that he was reducing teachers' administrative load: "I cannot conceive he would have made such an announcement if there was another side of the picture he was not revealing."

At the meeting, held under rules which mean speakers cannot be identified, some speakers suggested that teachers were too defensive.

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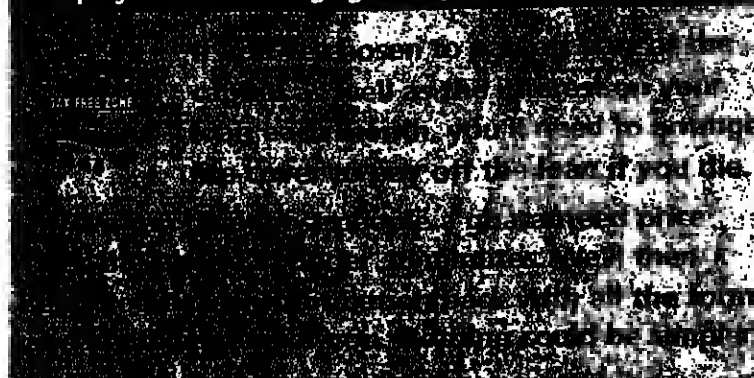


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news



Bra wars: Eva Herzigova in the advertisement that caused such a stir. Right: Trevor Beattie who has upset rivals by claiming credit for the campaign
Photograph: John Rasmussen

Breast-beating and tantrums as Bra Wars break out in ad land

Paul McCann
Media Correspondent

In the trendy bars and restaurants of Soho where advertising people hang out, a long-running feud about the 90s' most famous ad has become known as "Bra Wars" or the "Storm in a D-cup".

As if it hadn't already occupied more than enough acres of newsprint, the Wonderbra advertisements starring model Eva Herzigova have provoked letters to the industry's trade

magazine *Campaign*, temper tantrums at award ceremonies and much tossing of pony-tails across the West End.

The success of the Wonderbra advertising - credited with lifting an entire generation of women's breasts to just under

their chins - means there are plenty of people claiming to have been the originator of the idea.

The saga, which has been running for some time, flared up recently when the agency that made the advertisements,

TBWA, merged with another agency, and its creative director, Trevor Beattie, found himself without a job.

As the only advertising man with his own personal public relations adviser, Mr Beattie - now at agency GGT - made

sure he was never out of the limelight while he looked for a new job.

Much of this publicity led to references to Mr Beattie as the man "behind" the Wonderbra ads.

This has hacked off one Nigel

Rose, an art director at the cryptically named agency Euro RSCG Wank Goeper, who actually wrote the "Hello Boys" line that helped make the campaign a hit.

At the advertising industry Oscars, the D&AD awards, last month, Mr Beattie attempted to talk to Mr Rose who blanked him and provoked a stand-up row in front of the industry's glitterati.

Then last week *Campaign* received a letter establishing a counter-claim to the idea. Sam Hurford, an art director at Young & Rubicam, claimed that he and copywriter Murray Partridge devised the advertisements with the help of two women who came up with the lines of copy that preceded "Hello Boys" - "Say Goodbye to Your Feet" and "Who said Diamonds are a girl's best

friend?" Mr Hurford's letter said: "Sales and tits went up. And awards were won. And 'lo coincidence' Trevor Beattie wasn't in the room. Strange. In fact he wasn't even in the country. And Nigel Rose was working for CDP [another agency]."

"The dispute goes to the heart of what we all do," said Murray Partridge yesterday. "You live and die in advertising by your credits. They are worth money in the bank to you and you can go from earning £15,000 a year to £100,000 a year off the back of one good ad."

"It is hankie-stamping in luvvie-land," said Mr Beattie yesterday. "Nigel wrote the 'Hello Boys' line and I wrote the other lines, but it gets known as the 'Hello Boys' campaign and about half a dozen of us have at various times been called 'Mr Wonderbra' in the press."

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Improve or face fines, rail firms told

Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

The rail regulator yesterday threatened private rail companies with heavy fines if they do not improve their services.

John Swift QC, whose extensive powers include the power to impose unlimited cash penalties and modify train licences, targeted four areas where operators will have to "do better than they are at the moment".

New owners needed to improve the information passengers get about train running times and also upgrade timetable information provided by telephone inquiry bureaux as well as significantly better arrangements for disabled people at stations.

The regulator also singled out the sale of tickets by train companies as a matter for particular concern. Earlier this year, his office sent hundreds of investigators out to pose as passengers and identify the apparent failures of train operators to provide accurate and impartial information about fares.

More than 5,000 inquiries at booking offices and via passengers' phone lines were made by researchers to check how far sales staff provided information about alternative routes and ticket prices.

The results of Mr Swift's survey will be released in "a few weeks". Yesterday he refused to elaborate on its findings, however, senior aides to the regulator confirmed that tough action would be taken. "We promised in January to right any wrongs and considering the preliminary findings we shall be taking action," said one official.

The action was launched after Which? magazine, published by the Consumers' Association, last year said it had made more than 250 inquiries or purchases at 28 stations or inquiry points around the country and found train companies were overcharging nine out of 10 rail passengers.

The Consumers' Association yesterday welcomed the moves. "But it is worrying that he has to remind train companies of such simple objectives as co-ordinating services and delivering impartial and accurate ticket information."

Train companies will be expected to produce the plans for new ticketing arrangements by the end of this year. "There are

still challenges to be met and the industry is committed to meeting and exceeding them," said Ivor Warburton, the incoming chairman of the Association of Train Operating Companies, the group which represents all 25 private rail firms.

It is the second time in seven days that the regulator has weighed in on the side of the consumer. Last week, Mr Swift launched a fresh attack on Railtrack, the company that owns the nation's track and signalling, criticising its investment record and launching a review of up to £300m in public subsidies the company receives.

However, on the day that the rail regulator sought to highlight the need for better network be-



John Swift: Targeted four areas that need to improve

efits, the pressure group Save Our Railways revealed that train companies were secretly introducing new restrictions on the Network card - which gives passengers big discounts on train tickets in the south-east. "The Network card makes rail travel more affordable for tens of thousands of travellers. Rail privatisation has only just been completed and already the privatised companies are conspiring to get rid of it," said Jonathan Bray, a spokesman for Save Our Railways.

A spokesman for ATOC, which markets the card, said that it had been a victim of its own success. "There are about 430,000 cards in use. Around 50 per cent of all journeys are made by 14 per cent of card holders - most of whom are commuters. As the Network card was meant to be used by leisure travellers, we will be introducing restrictions in September."

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هنا من الأصل

Was Britain's greatest Arctic explorer a victim of cannibals?

Stephen Goodwin
Heritage Correspondent

One of the greatest Arctic explorers in British history might have met the most ignoble end of all: eaten by Eskimos or, worse, his fellow adventurers. The 150th anniversary of the death of Sir John Franklin was marked at ceremonies in London yesterday amid many fine words about "arguably Britain's greatest explorer of the Arctic".

But questions remain about the fate of Sir John and his crew as they struggled in vain to walk 1,000 miles out of the Arctic Circle. Canadian researchers have concluded from marks on skeletons found at Starvation Bay - 230 miles from where the 129 officers and men abandoned their ice-stricken ships - that the dwindling band resorted to cannibalism.

The Royal Navy has always rejected this slur on its men. But an alternative explanation for the scars that the retreating crew was finished off by Eskimos armed with snow knives, is unacceptable to the Canadians. Political correctness forbids them thinking the Inuit people capable of such barbarism.

The guests at yesterday's ceremonies, including descendants of Franklin, who proved his mettle as a midshipman at the Battle of Trafalgar, his officers and crew, were not about to conduct an inquest. Major Anthony Gell, Franklin's great-great grandson laid a wreath at his



forebear's memorial in Westminster Abbey and the party took a boat down the Thames to the Royal Naval College chapel at Greenwich. But there will be speculation on the side.

Ralph Lloyd-Jones, a librarian and Franklin expert, believes Sir John was simply a product of his heroic time - a man who "did not turn back when things went wrong" and suffered the consequences. Born in Spilsby, Lincolnshire, he entered the Navy at 14, earned an almost legendary reputation as a bold

explorer, and died, aged 61, before the grim trek south began. Once off their ships, *Erebus* and *Terror*, there was simply not enough for the sailors to survive on, tough characters though

they undoubtedly were. On an earlier overland venture to the Canadian Arctic led by Franklin, temperatures plunged to minus 50°C and the party was reduced to eating lichen, leather from

their clothes and boiled bones from exhumed carcasses.

The fateful expedition was an early example of great British failures in polar exploration, extending though Scott's tragic trip to the South Pole to recent unsuccessful bids at a solo crossing of Antarctica.

Franklin's ships became ice-bound 100 miles short of the elusive passage between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, later "discovered" by Roald Amundsen, the Norwegian who beat Captain Scott to the South Pole.

Mr Lloyd-Jones finds the Canadians' cannibalism theory less plausible than murder by Inuits, who would certainly have felt threatened by a large group of aliens. In 1859, an Admiralty search party found a ship's boat mounted on sledge runners. It contained two skeletons and two loaded shotguns were propped against the side.

Around 40 expeditions have been made to try and unravel the grim story of Franklin's last expedition - the early ones were sent by Lady Franklin who refused to accept her husband was dead - but they, like Sir John, have found the Arctic reluctant to yield its secrets.



Forgotten hero: Sir John Franklin and (inset) HMS *Erebus* and *Terror* in the Antarctic by John Wilson Carmichael. Photographs: National Maritime Museum

DAILY POEM

Thou'

by Philip Gross

A case of key and keyhole,
us: what clicks

or doesn't in a place not seen
until they're bits

dismantled, springs spilled everywhere;
when edges crisp

as cornflakes once don't always kiss;
what jams or slips

fumbled after the party, wrong door,
sorry; what fits

in the gullet or sticks like a glove,
depending how

precisely the spaces between us
are tooled, to

a tolerance, let's say, of the nearest thou'.

Thou': a thousandth of an inch (Engineering)

This poem comes from the summer 1997 edition of *Poetry London Newsletter*. It also features new work by (among others) Selima Hill, Moniza Alvi and Ruth Fainlight, as well as comprehensive poetry listings and reviews. One issue costs £3.50; annual subscriptions to *PLN* (£9 for three numbers) are available from Peter Daniels at 35 Beaufort Road, London N16 7AR.

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ng Kong

handover



Military two-step: Kate Tobias and Julie Wooding, curators at the National Army Museum, London, pose in a Lion Dance costume donated with other artefacts by the now disbanded Hong Kong Military Service Corps Photograph: Reuters

Blair agrees to brief encounter with the Chinese

Stephen Vines
Hong Kong

The scene has finally been set for the last Sino-British showdown in Hong Kong. With less than three weeks to go before the end of British rule, Tony Blair, the prime minister, yesterday confirmed that he would be attending the handover ceremony, while in Peking, China announced that the Chinese delegation will be led by the Communist Party leader, President Jiang Zemin.

Mr Blair made the announcement during Question Time in the House of Commons. He was asked whether the Government would owe a moral duty to the people of Hong Kong after 1 July.

"I do agree," the Prime Minister said. "I think that is important." He added: "I will be attending that handover ceremony myself."

It now looks likely that the two delegations will meet for only 45 minutes at the midnight handover ceremony, while Chinese leaders boycott Britain's sunset farewell ceremony and British leaders boycott China's ceremony to install the new administration.

China has yet to confirm it is staying away from the farewell ceremony but Britain has stated flatly that Mr Blair cannot attend a ceremony which includes the swearing-in of Provisional Legislative members.

The new legislature will replace Hong Kong's elected Legislative Council and has been characterised by both Britain and the United States as an illegitimate body. A Foreign Office spokesman said: "We're very much against this body and we won't be there at its birth."

China has decided to send a delegation which far outweighs Britain's in seniority and numbers. President Jiang, the head of state, outranks the Prince of Wales, who will only represent the British head of state.

More controversially, the Chinese delegation will include prime minister Li Peng, who is reviled in Hong Kong because of his role in the Tiananmen Square massacre of June 1989.

Government 'misled public'

A legislator's inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the sudden departure of Lawrence Leung, Hong Kong's Director of Immigration, pictured right, published its findings yesterday, concluding that there had been "a concerted effort by the Government to mislead the legislature and the public into what they knew to be untrue".

The chairman of the inquiry, Ip Kwok-him, said that the affair had "brought the Government into disrepute, seriously undermined its credibility and damaged the trust between the Legislative Council and the administration". However, the legislators were satisfied that the Government had good reasons for dismissing Mr Leung.

Mr Ip said that some of these reasons could not be made public, but he was "shocked" by information about Mr Leung which was revealed to his committee in camera.

He said that the committee had insufficient resources to get to the bottom of allegations of political involvement and implications of political impropriety which had been rumoured as factors leading to Mr Leung's departure.



In protocol terms, Mr Blair is his equivalent.

Qian Qichen, the Foreign Minister and vice-premier, will be shadowed by the Foreign Secretary Robin Cook. China has also named the leaders of a host of Communist front organisations as participants in the events. They include the heads of bodies such as the China Democratic League and the China Association for Promoting Democracy. Presumably the intention is to use the Hong Kong handover as a symbol of greater Chinese unity.

The large Chinese delegation also includes a number of officials who played a role in the negotiations for Hong Kong's return to Chinese rule but it specifically excludes China's principle player, the deposed Communist Party head Zhao Ziyang. Mr Zhao has yet to be brought in from political oblivion after having shown sympathy for the 1989 democracy protests. However, Margaret Thatcher, who led Britain's negotiations, will be in Hong Kong for the handover.

The concentrated presence of



Midnight's men: President Jiang and Li Peng are not expected to stay more than a few hours for the ceremony

the Chinese leadership in Hong Kong for the first time underlines the tremendous importance Peking attaches to resuming sovereignty over the last colony on Chinese soil. (The enclave of Macau is not regarded as a colony following an agreement to describe it as Chinese territory under Portuguese administration.)

The boycott of the swearing-in ceremony for the new administration was started by the US, which announced that Madeleine Albright, the Secretary of State, would not take part. US congressmen invited to attend the handover ceremonies have now said they will join her in the boycott.

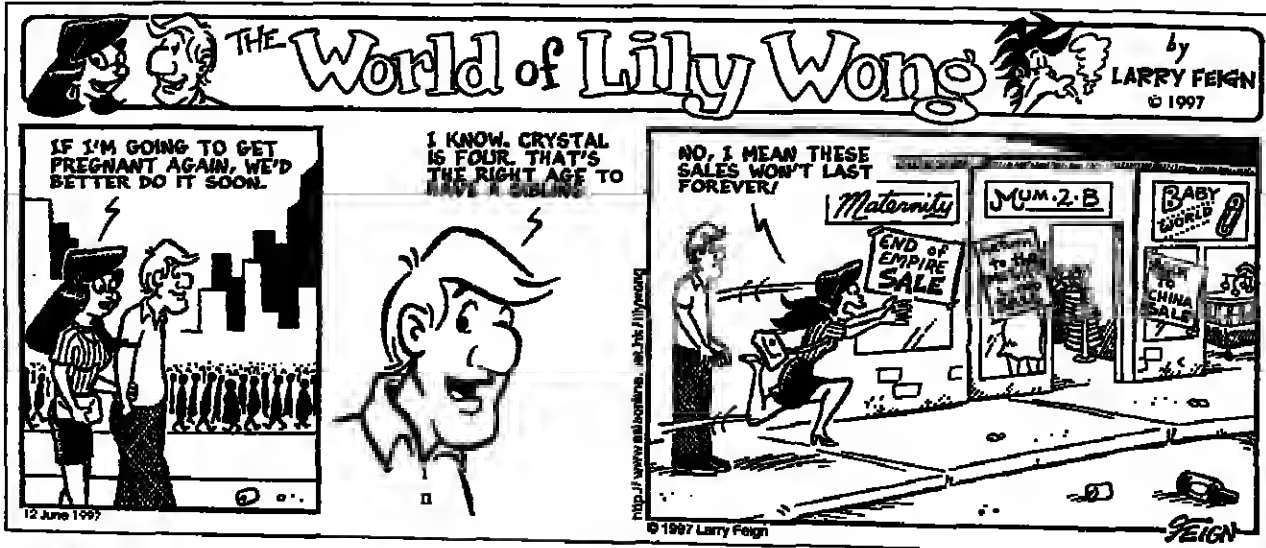
Other countries are considering whether they should be present. Australian politicians are putting pressure on their foreign minister to join the boycott and Britain is understood to have been sounding out its European Union partners.

A European diplomat based in Hong Kong said yesterday: "I don't think all the EU countries will be happy about annoying China, they are much more interested in trade."

Meanwhile, a new Hong Kong People's Coalition for the Alternative Handover will today announce a series of events to focus on improved living standards and bringing power to the grassroots.

Mr Jiang's visit to Hong Kong looks set to be unexpectedly brief for the leader of the triumphant new sovereign power, writes Teresa Poole in Peking.

China said he would attend the swearing-in of the chief executive and new legislature, but would return to Peking within hours to host a grand reception for 3,500 guests in the Great Hall of the People. This will lead on to a "grand convention" and a pageant at the Peking Workers' Stadium. China's top leaders appear nervous of spending too much time in Hong Kong, preferring the controlled environment of Peking's celebrations. The latest rumours are that Mr Jiang and Li Peng have been fitted out with bullet-proof vests for the visit.



هكذا من الأصل

Russia's fear of Pope halts summit

Phil Reeves
Moscow

Secret efforts to arrange a meeting between the heads of the world's two largest Christian churches, the Pope and the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, have fallen victim at the last minute to a fresh bout of the rivalry and suspicion that divided their institutions for nearly 1,000 years.

For months, Moscow and the Vatican have been talking privately about bringing the two leaders together for discussions to ease their strained relations, which have deteriorated sharply since the end of the Soviet Union.

The summit would have been a historical milestone as the Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches have been at odds since East and West were set against one another by the schism of 1054. They fought and bickered their way through most of the following nine centuries; no meeting has occurred between a Russian patriarch and a pope.

The meeting – supported by liberals in both camps – was to have been held later this month in Austria, one of the destinations on an international tour by the Russian Patriarch, Alexy II, which begins today. However, sources within his Moscow headquarters yesterday said the church's synod has ruled that the meeting was "premature" and cannot take place in the near future because of several "unresolved issues".

Although the synod's deliberations are traditionally shrouded in secrecy, it is clear that high on the list of mutual grievances is Moscow's anger at what it sees as predatory incursions into Russia by the Vatican in the aftermath of Communism. After re-establishing an official presence in Russia, the Catholic Church has reopened scores of parishes across the country, largely for Catholic ethnic communities – Poles and Germans – who were forced to suppress their

religious roots during the Soviet era. Under the widely-abused 1993 Russian constitution, they are entitled to worship freely, but they have met resistance from a nationalist and isolationist camp within the Orthodox Church, often supported by regional apparatchiks anxious to reinforce the church's unofficial status as an arm of the state.

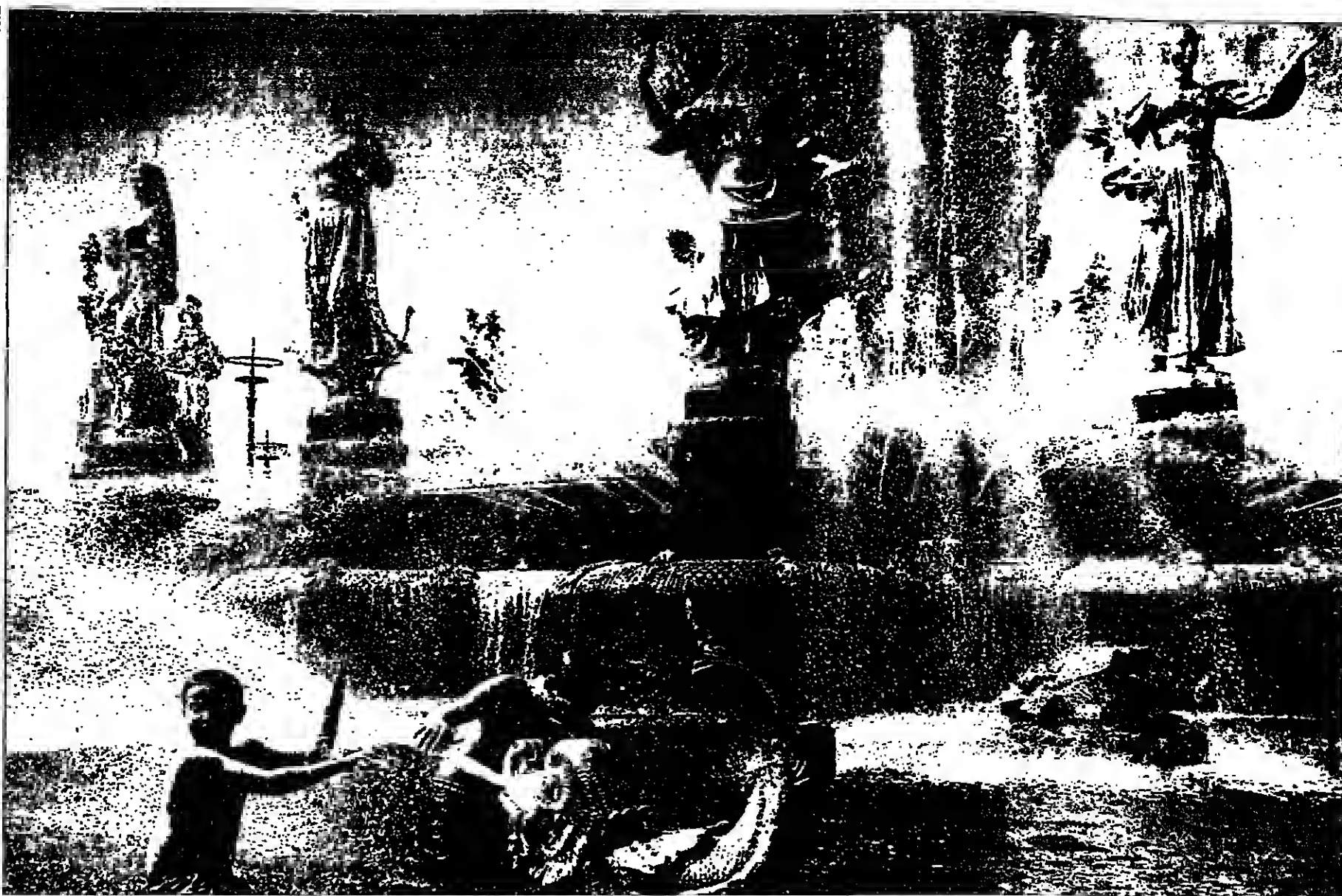
In general, competition from Rome is frowned on, even though there are well under 1 million Catholics on Russian territory, of whom only a small minority are active church-goers. The Catholics have been accused by church leaders in Moscow of "proselytising".

Further tensions flow from long-running disagreements over the Uniate Catholics in Ukraine and Belarus. The church, which answers to Rome but owes much of its liturgy to Orthodoxy, was forcibly merged with the Russian church by Stalin. It was recognised by Mikhail Gorbachev shortly before the fall of the Soviet Union – prompting many worshippers and clerics to sever their links with Moscow.

But the Moscow Patriarchate continues to treat Ukraine as part of its sphere of influence. It suspects the Uniate Catholics of trying to lure away their fellow Slavs by offering worship that resembles Orthodoxy but comes under the Vatican's sway. At times the battle for the souls of Ukrainians has led to violence.

Despite the advent of religious freedom in Russia, relations between the Christian church's two largest houses are significantly worse than they were at the end of the Soviet Union. The current mood of distrust reflects a generally isolationist mood that has seized the Orthodox Church. This is reflected in a tranche of new anti-constitutional laws sweeping across Russia's regions curbing religious freedom.

To this could soon be added a proposed law, due before parliament later this month, which would deny full legal status to minority faiths for 15 years.



Fountain of youth: Two boys defy officials to make a splash in the Friendship of Nations fountain at the All-Russia Exhibition Centre in Moscow as temperatures climbed to an early summer high of 30 degrees yesterday

Photograph: AP

Media stars put at mercy of Chechen gangs

Moscow — Russian journalists have been accused of many vices, from hits to bribe-taking. But a lack of guts is not usually among the charges levelled against them.

Reporters and photographers were in the thick of the bombing and mayhem during the war in Chechnya, although it was dangerous enemy territory for their countrymen in uniform.

With peace in place, they have continued going back to the republic, despite the risk of becoming the latest statistic in a rash of abductions that is placing Moscow's precarious relations with the Chechen separatist government under fresh strain.

In the last few weeks, the Russian media has watched in horror as one after another of its staff has been spir-

Moscow dismayed as reporters are kidnapped at gunpoint and huge ransom demands follow, writes Phil Reeves

ited away by armed Chechen gangs, demanding ransoms of up to \$3m. The victims include one of the country's top news reporters, 31-year-old Yelena Maslyuk, of the NTV network, who made her name by providing daring and graphic war reports from the region. Many Russians already believe that a humiliating peace deal was struck with their Islamic neighbours, seeing their media stars disappear is a large blow on a festering bruise.

Yesterday, the number of journalists kidnapped this year rose to nine after two journalists were forced

into a car at gunpoint during the early afternoon in the centre of Grozny, the capital, and taken off to captivity. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists in New York, seven other journalists disappeared in 1995 and 1996 and are feared dead.

Journalists are far from alone in being the target for kidnappers, who are depicted both in Moscow and Grozny as bandits who care nothing for politics, but a great deal for large sums of money. Since the end of the 21-month war last August, dozens of people – including western aid agency officials – have been abduct-

ed, serving a fresh reminder of the lawlessness that now prevails in post-war Chechnya. By far the worst outrage came late last year when six Red Cross workers were shot dead in their beds.

The latest kidnappings will particularly rankle with the Russians, who only three nights ago were treated to happy TV footage of four journalists who had just been released after three months of captivity and many rounds of intense negotiations.

Aid and media organisations routinely deny that they pay ransoms,

although there are persistent rumours that deals have been struck in which large sums of money have been paid, and Chechens have been released from Russian prisons.

Without doubt, some of the kidnappers have struck the jackpot. The Chechen president, Aslan Maskhadov, has insisted that he has personally led efforts to free kidnapped journalists, and has accused the kidnappers of jeopardising the republic's long and difficult recovery.

Last month – despite their differences – the Chechens and the Russians signed a peace treaty intended to end 400 years of hostility. But, with another two Russians behind bars, this outbreak of sweetness and light will prove hard to sustain.

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battle for the euro

Crisis moves on, leaving France and Germany still poles apart

John Lichfield
Paris

The brief Emu crisis, which may or may not have been a real crisis, will soon be over. The real crises have still to come.

The new French government will probably, after all, sign up to the disciplinary rules for the European single currency when EU leaders meet in Amsterdam next week. After causing a flurry of market and diplomatic anxiety, the French government has signalled that it can sign up for Emu budgetary discipline – the German-inspired Stability Pact – in return for a new text promising to re-focus EU efforts on growth and job-creation.

The details will be discussed when the EU Commission President Jacques Santer visits Paris today for talks with both President Jacques Chirac and Prime Minister Lionel Jospin.

A Franco-German summit in Poitiers tomorrow, which had threatened to be explosive, may now become a wary but friendly re-affirmation of the Franco-German alliance.

But all the longer-term problems with Economic and Monetary Union remain. Neither France nor Germany seem remotely likely to meet the Maastricht guidelines for budgetary discipline this year; the new government in Paris and the Kohl administration remain poles apart on whether the single currency should include Italy, Spain and Portugal from the start.

Why Lionel and Blair are out of step



Rumours of a rift: Tony Blair and Lionel Jospin

John Lichfield

Tony Blair was in Paris last night for a long-arranged working dinner with President Chirac at the Elysée Palace. The Prime Minister had also made several efforts to arrange a meeting with the new French premier, Mr Jospin. But he had been rebuffed. Mr Jospin said that he was too busy to see him.

Officially, both governments insist that this was not a snub. The two ascendant stars of the European left saw each other only last week at the gathering of European socialists and social democrats in Malmö, Sweden, where the two men delivered very different messages. They will meet again at the EU summit in Amsterdam next Monday and Tuesday.

But it is highly unusual or a top European leader to visit the French President without also seeing the Prime Minister. This is doubly so when the two most important offices of the French state are held by men from different parties. Mr Jospin's office said: "They have nothing new to say. It's as simple as that. There is no problem."

But the satirical and investigative newspaper, *Le Canard Enchaîné*, reported yesterday that there was indeed a certain *froidur* between the two men. During his election campaign, Mr Jospin made several attempts to prise from Mr Blair "a few words of encouragement or a gesture of support", the newspaper said. Such an intervention by Mr Blair, fresh from his own electoral triumph and much lionised in France, might have had quite an impact

The brief crisis began in Luxembourg on Monday, when the French finance minister, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, said France wanted a "period of reflection" before signing the stability pact which commits single currency members to strict fiscal and budgetary discipline. Mr Strauss-Kahn said he was not challenging the pact itself; he wanted to be sure that the EU would also be taking appropriate joint, political decisions to promote growth and jobs.

The furious reaction of the German government and the European Commission, and the startled reaction of the markets, seems to have taken the Jospin government by surprise. Mr Strauss-Kahn's announcement was intended as a minimum down-payment on the Socialists' campaign promises to budge the Emu project away from rigid monetarist orthodoxy towards a greater concern for growth and employment. But it was also intended as a statement of the new French government's intention to push ahead with Emu, whatever the apparent difficulties.

On Tuesday, the Jospin administration seemed for many hours not to know whether it was coming or going; getting firmer or softer. The European affairs minister, Pierre Moscovici, dismissed the possibility of a compromise declaration. Paris would insist on a "real delay." President Chirac seemed to put himself on the side of France's EU partners, and

against the new Socialist government, by calling for a signing of the Stability Pact in Amsterdam.

Then, Mr Jospin, after a meeting with the Dutch Prime Minister, Wim Kok, said the delay might only be one

week after all. "Great efforts" would be needed to agree a text on employment and growth in time. "But we will make them," he said.

It remains to be seen whether Mr Jospin has won anything concrete. Ac-

cording to one version, the declaration on jobs will be little more than a mish-mash of existing commitments in the Maastricht treaty and an extension of texts which were already under discussion as part of the inter-govern-

mental negotiation on EU treaty reform. According to another version, the declaration will be written into the new treaty itself and fleshed out before the end of the year. It could then amount to a real attempt to create the kind of

EU-wide policy for growth which the German government and the previous British government long resisted.

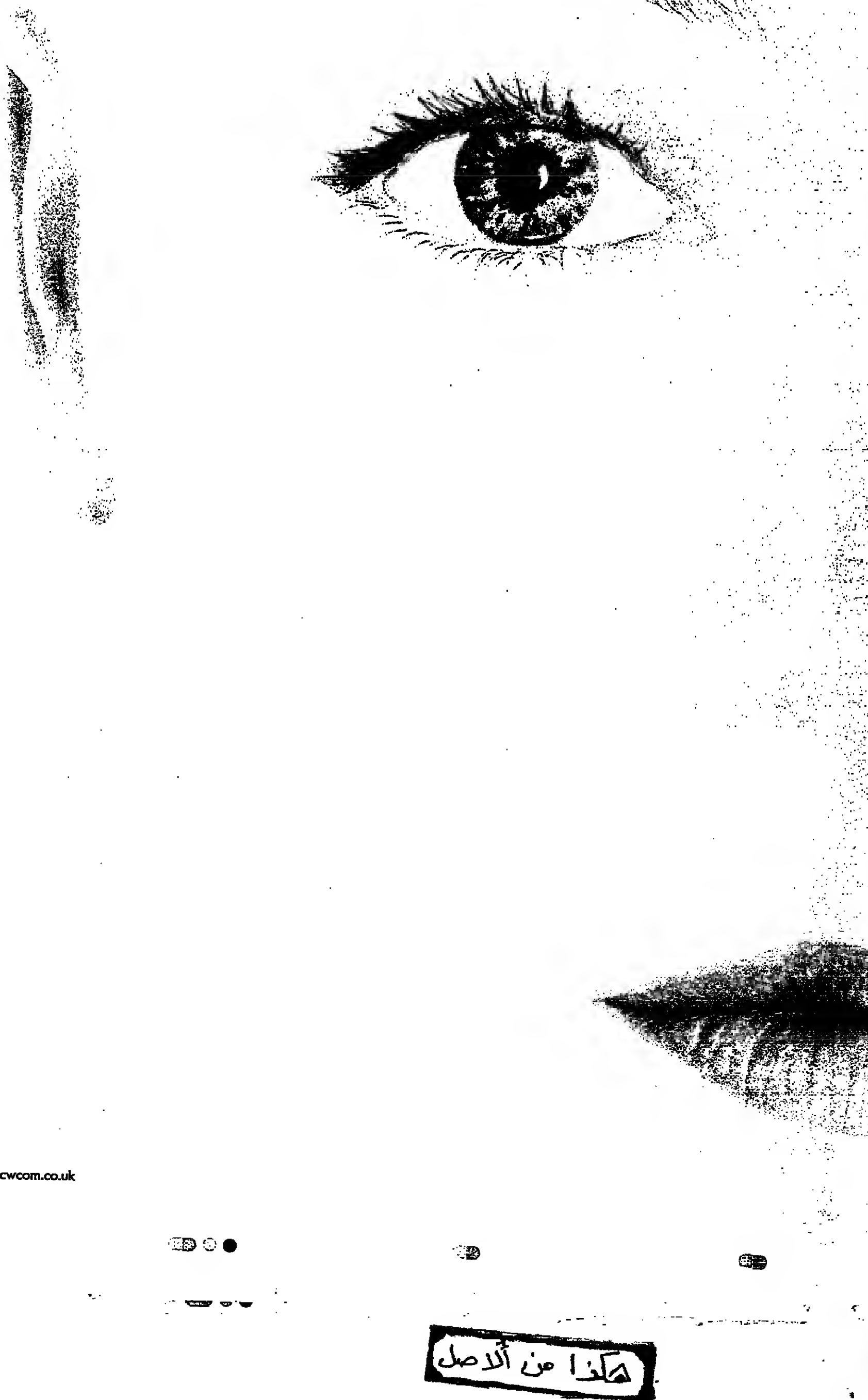
How that squares with the essentially deflationary and monetarist texts of the existing EMU project is unclear.



French finance minister Dominique Strauss-Kahn outside the Elysée. He said earlier France wanted to reflect before signing the stability pact

Photograph: AP

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battle for the euro

Bonn tries to keep lid on Emu protest



Parade non grata: German policemen demonstrating with firefighters in Bonn yesterday against Chancellor Helmut Kohl's plans for public sector cuts in order to meet the criteria for European monetary union. Photograph: Reuters

Inna Karacs
Bonn

The German government struggled yesterday to quell a gathering storm of protest against European monetary union, and was forced to deny rumours that it was secretly plotting to postpone the project.

As the parliamentary consensus over the euro crumbled, Chancellor Helmut Kohl found himself in the cross-fire. For the first time, the German left appeared to be lining up with the new French government, while the right was moving to block the Chancellor's escape route towards a fudge.

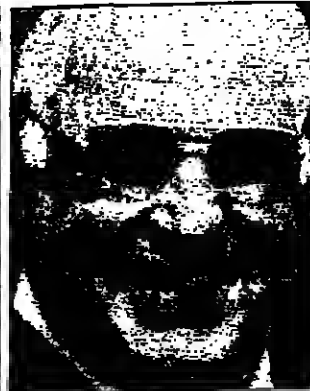
Mr Kohl and his ministers drew on their most apocalyptic vocabulary yet to parry demands for softening the Maastricht criteria or for putting off the start of monetary union beyond 1999.



Chancellor Kohl and Mr Kinkel are warning of catastrophe if European monetary union is put off beyond 1999

The Chancellor warned: "All other options would have catastrophic consequences for the German economy, catastrophic consequences for the labour market, for our currency and for others."

Klaus Kinkel, the Foreign



Minister, told parliament that any talk of a postponement would result in Germany's "isolation" and cause "enormous damage". Were the euro to be delayed, Europe would suffer a "loss of face", there would be a flight to the Deutschmark and fiscal efforts of the past years would have been in vain.

So terrified is the government of this scenario that it has apparently been making quiet preparations to rein in these primeval forces if ever they are unleashed. According to unnamed government sources cited by the *Berliner Morgenpost* newspaper, Mr Kohl's administration is drawing up contingency plans for a one-year postponement. Monetary union would thus be launched in the year 2000, but the changeover would be completed two years later, as envisaged under the original schedule.

Pressure for a delay is mounting among Mr Kohl's Bavarian sister party, the Christian Socialists. With all evidence pointing to a failure by Germany to meet the Maastricht criteria this year, the Bavarians are convinced that their country is in danger of playing midwife to a currency of little worth.

In public, the Christian Socialists are backing Mr Kohl's line, but privately they argue that a postponement would be a better solution than a soft euro. They have signalled that if the budget deficit goes much above the 3 per cent allowed, they will vote against German participation in EMU.

The opposition Social Democrats and Greens, meanwhile, have finally pricked up their ears to the howls of protest in the streets against euro-inspired austerity. Echoing the sentiments of their French comrades, the politicians of the left served notice yesterday that if it came to a choice between the new money and the jobs, they would support the latter.

"The single currency must not become a monetary strait-jacket," said the Social Democrats' leading euroophile, Heidemarie Wiczorek-Zeul.

The Greens have also suddenly caught the whiff of an ideologically distasteful odour emanating from the currency they had once supported almost unquestioningly. There was a danger, warned the Green MP Christian Sterzing, that the euro might become "an instrument of economic neo-liberalism". With such denunciations ringing in his ears, Mr Kohl goes to France tomorrow to exhort Germany's closest ally to make more sacrifices. The mission looks almost impossible.

As Helmut Schmidt, the former Social Democrat chancellor, noted in an article yesterday, Germany is not the flavour of the month: "With its insistence on strict adherence to the Maastricht criteria, and its 'currency racism' against southern European countries... Germany has made itself more unloved than at any time in the last 50 years," he wrote in the weekly *Die Zeit*.

Spanish leaders show solidarity with Helmut

Elizabeth Nash
Madrid

Spanish political leaders closed ranks yesterday in defence of the countdown towards European monetary union, lining up tacitly behind the buffeted German Chancellor Helmut Kohl. With the fate of the euro in the balance, the conservative Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar and the Socialist opposition leader, Felipe Gonzalez, insisted Spain must hold fast to its course.

Speaking in the State of the Nation debate yesterday, Mr Aznar pledged to contribute to the building of a single currency "without putting into question either criteria or timetables or results achieved after laborious negotiations". He added that Spain was on the point of fulfilling all the requirements and hoped to join first time round.

His speech was a clear gesture of comfort to Chancellor Kohl, now the conservative Mr Aznar's principal political ally in Europe. Peppering his speech with references to the "new Europe" that Spain aspired to join, Mr Aznar promised to meet the "important challenge" imposed by Brussels, adding - in a nod to prevailing breezes - that "social protection" should not be neglected.

Mr Gonzalez in reply said the

decision of a third of Europeans to change their government "complicated" prospects for next week's Amsterdam summit and created "uncertainties". But he insisted "we must keep to the calendar established by Maastricht", and added with a smile that as a signatory of the treaty he was "one of the guilty men - but I have no regrets". This brief and delicate reference gave little hint of the profound humiliation he would feel if the complex deal on monetary union fell apart.

Yesterday's debate was relaxed and conciliatory by comparison with recent ill-tempered slanging matches. Spain's standing in Europe is of such transcendental importance to Madrid that the changing together of ranks, the reaffirmation of a common approach, is no surprise.

But with Labour's victory in Britain and of the Socialists in France, both Spanish leaders find themselves out of step with their European colleagues. "We are the last right-wing bastion in Europe," Mr Aznar said last week, a bunkerist declaration that made even his supporters groan. Mr Gonzalez, too, feels outmoded by Tony Blair and Lionel Jospin, in comparison with whom he recently described himself as a "dinosaur".

significant shorts

Iraqi dissidents claim murder of army officer

A major Iraqi opposition group yesterday claimed that dissidents have killed a senior army officer. The mainly Shia group, the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, said Maj. Gen. Ahmed Ezididin Al-Dulaimi was killed on 29 May while on his way to his headquarters in Baghdad. There was no way to confirm the claim, made in a written statement by the Iran-based group. AP - Cairo

Congo leaders call for ceasefire

President Pascal Lissouba and the leader of a private militia yesterday called for a ceasefire between their forces to end fighting that has devastated the capital. "I'm ordering a ceasefire from this moment," Mr Lissouba said on national radio. His rival, Gen. Denis Sassou-Nguesso, went on his own private radio to announce that he, too, had agreed to a ceasefire. AP - Brazzaville

Australian rhino sanctuary plan

The Australian state of Queensland is hoping to persuade Nelson Mandela to back plans for an outback wilderness haven for rhinoceros. The proposal aims to combine the need to develop the state's vast savannah with efforts to save the rhino, officials said yesterday. AP - Brisbane

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international

United Nations cash row that threatens to isolate America

A bloody diplomatic ruckus is set to break out today with the expected publication in Washington of plans for the repayment by the United States of only a portion of the roughly \$1.3bn (£760m) that it owes the United Nations.

The package, negotiated over several months behind closed doors on Capitol Hill, will be ballyhooed by President Bill Clinton's administration as a breakthrough in the long-running impasse over US contributions.

To the rest of the UN membership, it is likely to come over as a slap in the face. If it is enacted as drafted, the plan would entail a sharp increase in the dues that Britain and the rest of the European Union members would pay to keep the UN functioning.

Not only does the package propose paying only \$813m in back due, a third of the total that the UN believes it is owed, but it is also laden with conditions that are highly controversial. The delinquent contributions would, for instance, only be paid over a period of three years.

"This is less even than what the administration had been talking to us about," remarked one angry European diplomat yesterday.

Anger is reaching a pitch with the US, if only because by withholding its UN dues, it is blatantly violating its obligations under international treaty to pay up the full amount of its contributions on time.

"It is seen here as an issue of law and international obligation, but it is not seen like that in Washington," another diplomat said.

"What is happening is clearly weakening the position of the US, as well as the position of all of us who are trying to stand up for international law on other matters."

Due to be made public at a

US refusal to pay its dues causing a diplomatic furore, writes David Osborne in New York

meeting of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee this morning, the package was hammered out in negotiations between the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Helms and Senator Joseph Biden, the ranking Democrat on the committee. Mr Biden was essentially speaking for the Clinton administration.

Most vexing will be demands for strict ceilings on the levels of American contributions in future years. The US share of the regular UN budget would be cut in the second year of the repayment programme from 25 per cent now to 22 per cent. From the third year it would be capped at 20 per cent. Washington's share of peace-keeping costs would also fall from 31 per cent to 25 per cent.

Barring a miraculous agreement to squeeze higher levels of contribution from fast-growing Asian countries, the budgetary fall-out for Europe could be considerable. The EU countries would probably see their share of the regular budget rise from 32 per cent now to almost 40 per cent, which is twice what the US is now proposing to pay.

Diplomats are, meanwhile, predicting serious pain for the US inside the organisation. The standing of the US has already been weakened by the dispute. So impaired is American diplomacy here that the new US envoy Bill Richardson has been asking Britain's Sir John

Weston to make the running on Security Council issues that are important to Washington.

And a more urgent crisis is looming for the US. Unless a very large payment is forthcoming soon, it will fall foul early next year of Article 19 of the Charter. This stipulates that any country more than two years behind in its contributions must be stripped of its right to vote in the General Assembly.

If the new US ceilings are imposed in the position of Washington in the UN would inevitably be corroded in other, more subtle, ways.

"People will begin to question the various perks the US enjoys at the UN in terms of the prominence of their people here," one diplomat warned.

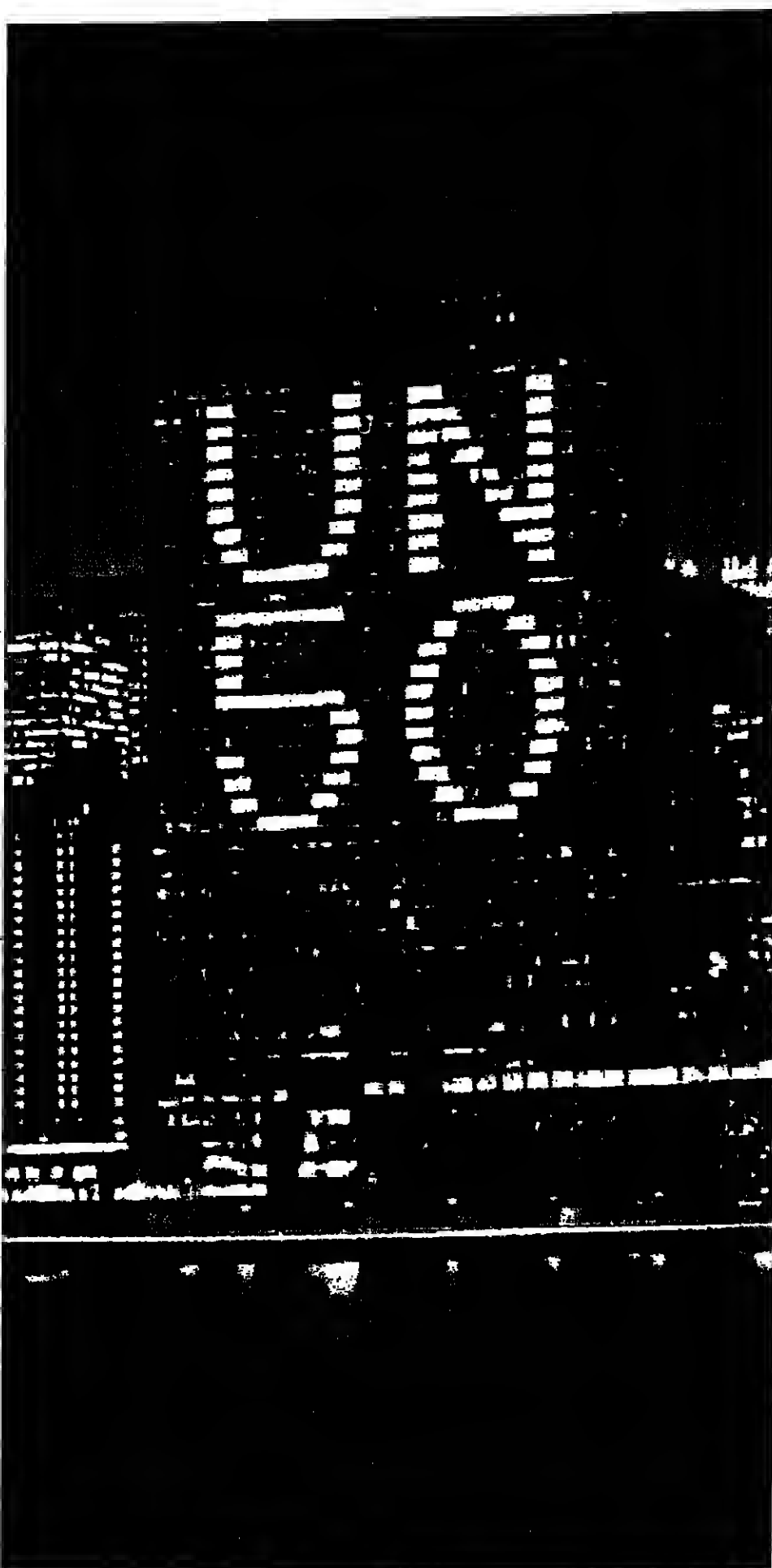
The same person, who asked to remain anonymous, also suggested that the Security Council would begin turning down any requests for peace-keeping operations that are clearly for the benefit of Washington.

"If they asked for an operation like the current mission in Haiti, for instance, I am afraid Congress would have to pay for it on its own pockets."

The proposed package would be conditional on the US President pledging to certify annually that the UN is attaining certain goals on internal reform. These would include additional cuts in UN personnel as well as strict diets for its array of international programmes.

The document requires the President to certify that the organisation is not attempting any of the following: to create its own standing army, to impose global taxes to raise funds or in any way undermine the US Constitution.

Additionally, the UN would have to agree to surrender its accounts every year to scrutiny by Congress's own financial auditing body, the General Accounting Office.



Dark outlook The United Nations building in New York in 1995, lit up to celebrate the UN's 50th anniversary. Cash problems cast a shadow over the future Photograph: Reuters

Scandal-hit Democrats appeal for fresh funds

Mary Dejevsky
Washington

The succession of funding scandals that has hit the US Democratic Party in recent months has taken a severe toll on the party's finances and the Democratic National Council has launched an urgent appeal for contributions.

Last night, President Bill Clinton, and Vice President Al Gore prepared to do their bit for the cause by addressing a dinner in central Washington for several dozen of the party's most prominent supporters. Those attending were to be urged to raise at least 250,000 dollars each over the next two years to see the party through the mid-term legislative elections and prepare the way for the presidential contest in 2000.

The dinner was part of a wider appeal, spearheaded by the party's political strategist James Carville, to try to rescue the party's ailing finances. The Democrats are \$14m (£8.6m) in debt from last year's presidential election and are in the process of refunding an estimated \$3m dollars in contributions suspected of coming illegally from foreign sources.

In letters that are just starting to arrive in members' mailboxes, Mr Carville describes the situation as "dire" and says the party is already having to cut back its operations.

"Without immediate action," he writes, "any hope of retaking Congress next year, or in 2000, may evaporate before our eyes. In addition, our party could be crippled for years." He also warns: "You'll also be looking at a Republican Congress and a Republican president in 2000."

While the letter smacks to an extent of fund-raiser's hyperbole, the finances of the Democratic Party have been far from healthy ever since the turn of the year. Although President Clinton was easily re-elected last November, the campaign was expensive and the party's cof-

fers have not been replenishing as the party of a second-term president might have hoped.

In his appeal, Mr Carville has the blame for the dearth of new contributions on the Republicans (for exploiting the Democrats' funding woes). Admitting that the Democrats made some "honest mistakes", he says the Republicans then did "everything possible ... to drag our party's name through the mire".

The "honest mistakes" include fund-raising coffee-mornings at the White House, the use of White House offices and telephones to solicit campaign contributions, and rewards for generous donors, ranging from bed-and-breakfast in the White House Lincoln bedroom to trips in the presidential plane. Any of these, if true, would break rules that forbid the use of the White House for party, rather than presidential, purposes.

In an attempt to limit the damage to the party from such accusations, President Clinton agreed to the formation of a congressional committee to investigate possible fund-raising abuses by both main parties.

Since reports of fund-raising abuses started to circulate, however, the problem is no longer excessive contributions, but no contributions at all. Two big donors have said they will no longer contribute. Others seem wary of contributing for fear of tarnishing their good name by association, while many individual donors have become cynical. A recent survey showed that two-thirds of those asked said their elected representatives would be more responsive to large political contributors than to their constituents.

The most optimistic outcome of the current problems would be a thorough discussion of ways in which the system could be reformed. The more likely outcome is a Democratic Party machine that is so tainted and strapped for cash that it becomes a serious liability to Al Gore if he decides to run for president in 2002.

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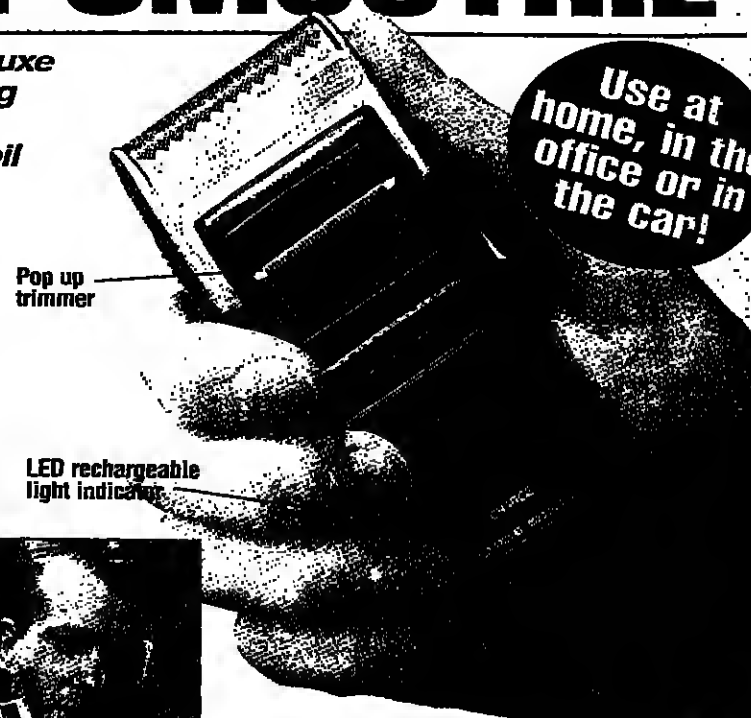
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Any old iron will do for Albania's smugglers

Drugs and guns replaced by scrap as the trafficking trade hits hard times

Andrew Gumbel
Shkoder, Albania

"Look at these beautiful new villas up on the hillside," said our guide, a hardened northern Albanian peasant called Toma. "Not so long ago we made a good living around here."

The living in question was sanctions-busting, the illegal transport of petrol over the border to Montenegro during the wars in the former Yugoslavia. Not to mention a little gun-running to Kosovo, drugs trans-shipment to Europe and any number of rackets in stolen consumer goods from western Europe.

With the country in a state of protracted chaos following this spring's anti-government uprisings, smuggling in Albania has become a more uncertain, less democratic, business. The major rackets in drugs and arms are continuing, but without the mass involvement of ordinary Albanians. The Shkoder region – an impoverished area largely populated by agricultural smallholders – depends on illegal traffic for a living. But these days the megabucks of oil smuggling have given way to the pathetic trade in scrap metal. Every day, up to 150 lorries – weighed down with rusting pieces of old cars and obsolete industrial machinery – trundle their way to an officially non-existent border crossing between the sea and Lake Shkoder and make the tortuous six-hour journey to



All at sea: Smuggling in Albania has been reduced to a frenzy in the search for something to sell. Powerboat owners play cat and mouse with the Italian coastguard to ply their illegal trade. Photograph: AP

a truck for sale across the border. In various seaside towns in the south, owners of fast powerboats play nightly games of cat and mouse with the Italian coastguard, knowing that their vessels travel faster.

The most wondrous story, however, comes from the border with Macedonia, where a group of Albanians determined to make a fast buck decided to bypass normal frontier controls by driving a stolen Mercedes along a mountain track and then physically carrying it over a pass for sale on the other side. After much grunting and heaving, they were finally caught, dazed and exhausted, by an incredulous Macedonian police patrol. The fate of the Mercedes was not recorded in the official report.

their families. In reality, though, it is not much of a trade at all, since the truck drivers earn no more than £100 per consignment (a fraction of what was earned at the height of the oil bonanza) and the Montenegrins are forever playing games by withholding payment or creating problems at the border. A unit of the Yugoslav army special forces stationed a few hundred yards away from the crossing is forever preventing the truck drivers from returning home, occasionally arresting individuals and – according to Montenegrin police sources – beating them up.

In the past couple of weeks the Albanian authorities, no doubt made nervous by the presence of international troops monitoring their activities, have imposed obstacles of their own, turning back trucks coming up to the border from central or southern Albania. Smuggled scrap metal nevertheless remains the main source of export revenue for Albania, according to the prosecutor's office in the capital, Tirana, and offers a telling insight into the sheer misery into which the Albanian economy has been plunged.

Not only has the productive economy ground to a halt, but government revenues have dried up because the state no longer controls key customs points and is unable to collect taxes. Inflation is galloping towards 100 per cent a year, and the lek is plummeting in value against the dollar. All consumer goods are effectively smuggled into the country, particularly in the southern port of Saranda, where the rebels who took over the lower half of Albania in February and March are in complete control.

The rebels have also developed sophisticated racketeering operations, notably in the high-quality marijuana grown in the flatlands of the south. Italian prosecutors say their police are seizing several hundred kilos of the drug every day – a fraction of the true amount believed to be flooding Italy and the rest of western Europe.

Until the multinational force arrived, most of the marijuana was going out from the port of Vlorë, but regular patrols by Italian navy corvettes have encouraged the smugglers to divert the traffic elsewhere. In Lexha, halfway between Tirana and Shkoder, one petrol station attendant said business was booming like never before, because the town was now being used as a transit point for marijuana and the beneficiaries

had all bought themselves gas-guzzling Mercedes.

Hard drugs, particularly heroin, are still passing through Albania from Turkey and the eastern Balkans, but are now

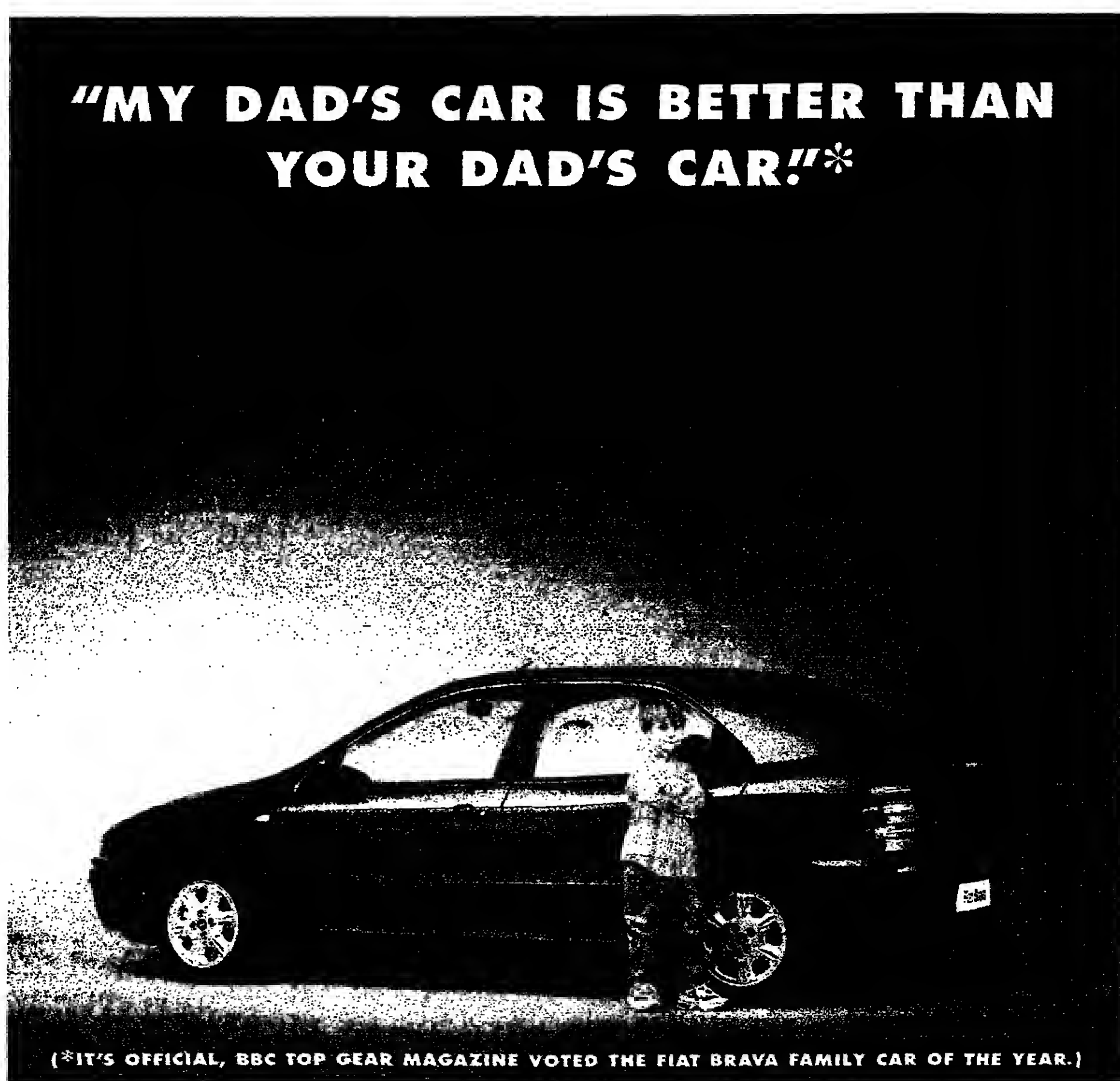
being transported over land rather than by sea, according to Italy's chief anti-Mafia prosecutor, Pier Luigi Vigna. All of Albania's neighbours are afraid of an influx of arms, now that

Albanian households are brimming with Kalashnikovs and submachine guns. But so far there seems to be no organised weapons smuggling operation. Among ordinary Albanians,

impooverished by the collapse of so-called pyramid investment schemes, a kind of smuggling frenzy appears to have set in, with all attempts to earn a living being attempted, no mat-

ter how absurd. At a deserted army base on the road to Shkoder, a group of smugglers were recently seen pulling an abandoned tank to pieces and loading the metal pieces on to

"MY DAD'S CAR IS BETTER THAN YOUR DAD'S CAR!"*



Watching brief: Top Italian prosecutor Pier Luigi Vigna

the Montenegrin state-owned foundry in Niksic.

It's a thankless, if efficiently organised, business. One Montenegrin middleman monitors the border, handing out "certificates" guaranteeing the lorries safe passage. In Niksic, another middleman takes delivery of the scrap, weighing it and promising payment within seven days or so.

Everyone is paid off, from the Albanian policemen monitoring the bridge across the Buna river leading to the border crossing, to the Montenegrin officials involved at every step of the process. The foundry pays a private import-export company for the scrap in Yugoslav dinars, and the company then passes on the proceeds in German marks – minus a considerable cut for itself – to the truck drivers.

In theory, it is a traffic that makes everyone happy: the Montenegrins because they can buy scrap at a fraction of the market price, and the truck drivers because they can feed

the perfect gift.

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Britain's role in a reformation of Europe

Europe is in a mess. The Franco-German alliance, that great motor of unification, common currency and all, is stuttering. The recent meeting of European Christian democrats paralleling the socialists' lovefest in Sweden disclosed, not for the first time, deep divisions in basic concepts of Europe. The intellectual underpinnings of post-Maastricht European unity, never very secure, are coming adrift. British commentators and politicians must not gloat – especially Labour ministers who owe their present good fortune to opt-out clauses negotiated by the Tories. We cannot simply play the innocent bystander. If the project for a common currency on the existing timetable comes a cropper, some pieces will have to be put back together – not for the sake of some mistaken historicist conception of European unity, but for the sake of national security promoted by trade, continental harmony and shared sovereignties. The Blair government ought to go to the Amsterdam summit determined to protect our position, on borders as on defence. But at the same time Britain's representatives need not just to be thinking ahead to the next move in the Union diplomatic game but thinking hard about the reformation of Europe in the new century.

Lionel Jospin and the Socialists are already showing signs of being – as the Germans politely put it – *oscillierend*. It is conceivable that, over the next few days, the recent raucousness surrounding the common currency will die down. The Christian Social Union, the party to which German finance minister Theo Waigel belongs, may stop sniping across the Rhine. The new French government meanwhile may complete its "re-reading" of the stability pact that is to accompany the establishment of an independent European central bank, and which is due to be signed in Amsterdam next week. Some anodyne form of words about jobs and social stability may be added in Amsterdam. The train gets back on track. It's conceivable. But it's inconceivable that the Kohl government will cut and tax to meet the convergence criteria without opening its political flank to the left. It's inconceivable, also, that the Italian state will undergo a miraculous transformation and get its fiscal act together. That means, unless Lionel Jospin swallows his election promise that the euro would not go ahead without Italy, that the common currency will be born soft – and that in turn means most of the fiscal fear and loathing in France and Germany over recent years will have been in vain.

All of that has to do with the practical problems of EMU. Perhaps more telling is how during the past few days profound gaps have opened underneath the theory. This is about more than the French government being social-conservative while the German coalition is conservative-liberal. Fundamental questions about the size and capacity of government are being prompted; questions which, thanks to the Thatcher experience, seem to have been answered to the electorate's satisfaction here. The paradox is that the common currency comes from the political right, from the neo-liberal side of economics. It is four square with the original common market idea, defined (according to a German Social Democrat who wanted nothing to do with it) as conservative, capitalist and clerical. The conceit of Jacques Delors as Commission president was to suggest that somehow, without changing the basic institutional landscape or profound renegotiation, Europe could become a "socialist" guarantor of jobs and employment rights. Prime Minister Thatcher made the great error of believing him. Naturally the French government is confused. It is signing up to a banker-dominated Europe with one hand while with the other using its position as a Renault shareholder to demand the postponement of the closure of its Vitroverre plant. As if governments can will consumers into buying Meganes and Espaces.

The same kind of attempt to square circles is visible in Brussels. The main argument for a single currency is that it will allow the European countries better to compete, globally, by facilitating internal trade and empowering European companies to beat the Americans, Japanese and other Asians. This is a good argument, though not a guaranteed outcome. But how does it line up with the philosophy of high employment costs, exemplified in remarks by the Social Affairs Commissioner reported yesterday, to the effect that worker participation in European companies was "a necessity". Perhaps there is, as the Socialist International at Malmö proposed, "a new economic and social model sufficiently supple to consolidate the position of Europe in the world without prejudicing our environmental and social norms." But the European Union is many miles away from conceptualising such a thing, let alone agreeing it.

There are indications this week that the Germans may now agree to delay the euro, pushing into 1999 the tripwire decision to go ahead that is due next May. Amid present confusion this seems like common sense. The would-be Social Democrat contender Gerhard Schröder raises the intriguing thought that a functioning stability pact could then precede the move to a common currency. Such a delay is the least of what is needed. The idea that the Brits can come riding in on a charger is anachronistic

and arrogant. But somebody is going to have to put up papers and say awkward, realistic things. Like, is Maastricht II actually needed, especially when it seems to contain nothing to address the question of EU expansion to the East beyond some tinkering with majority voting in the council of ministers. The British presidency next year will prove its worth not by saying no, nor unthinkingly yes, but by practical, limited proposals for rescuing European integration from its muddles and evasions.

All change at Transport

Merging the Environment and Transport Departments makes sense. It is not just that after the privatisation of airports and railways there was so much less for Transport to do. Decisions about transport infrastructure affect local authorities, regional development and the physical environment: all the more reason for lodging them in Environment. So Whitehall is dispensing with the services of Sir Patrick Brown, permanent secretary at Transport. He has been a loyal and efficient civil servant but if he cares for the good name of his colleagues he will avoid taking jobs anywhere near the rail or water businesses, having been so close to their privatisation.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Flawed siting of 'green' electricity

Sir: Nothing would induce me to pay extra for being supplied with "green" electricity (report, 5 June), as long as this would be interpreted by the wind-power industry as encouragement for further landscape despoliation of our most beautiful open countryside. Present plans are to erect 10,000 turbines – each as high as Big Ben – mainly in our prime recreational landscapes. Such appallingly damaging siting is not entirely the wind-power industry's fault. This government has inherited a flawed renewables policy, which forces the industry into seeking such sites.

The tragedy is that we do need to develop renewables and the present clumsy market approach – which places the landscape's value at zero – is making more thoughtful solutions harder to achieve.
JOHN S L EDWARDS
Monmouth

Sir: Your report (5 June) that consumers will be able to buy green electricity following liberalisation of the domestic energy market from April 1998 suggested that this new opportunity was first unveiled at the Climate Change conference organised by the World Wide Fund for Nature. For 18 months, Friends of the Earth has been at the forefront of this new agenda.

In the run-up to liberalisation, it is essential that all electricity consumers receive information from their electricity companies on the fuel they use. Consumers receive little or no environmental information from their regional electricity company on the product they buy. The regional electricity companies have a key role to play in educating the public on the contribution to climate change from different fuel sources, and on the need to use electricity far more efficiently and from renewable sources. For such a scheme to work, it would have to be mandatory and have the backing of government.
DR PATRICK GREEN
Friends of the Earth
London N1

Sir: It is a good idea for consumers to be allowed to choose electricity from renewable sources, but with price differences of perhaps 10 per cent, individuals would be likely to reject the burden of change being transferred from the electricity companies to themselves. If VAT relief was debated as an option to close the price gap to more realistic levels, Labour would have the opportunity of demonstrating where they stand in the areas of progressive environmentalism and profit-oriented utilities.
MARK WALMSLEY
Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire



infringement something which "is done for experimental purposes relating to the subject-matter of the [patented] invention". What a patent does is to enable the proprietor of an invention to control for a limited period of time its commercial exploitation, and rightly so; without patents, plagiarism would be rife, innovators and their backers would be denied the often necessary incentive to invest, and proprietors of inventions would resort to the only (and imperfect) alternative of trade secrecy, thereby massively inhibiting research. The draft Directive would do nothing to remove the public's (or a competitor's) ability to seek to revoke a patent which they believe has been wrongly granted, using the procedures laid down in the Patents Act 1977 or the European Patent Convention.
ANDREW SHEARD
Patent Attorney
Kilburn Stride
London WC1

Sir: One has to question why Sam Clarke (Letters, 10 June) is giving a misleading view on the draft European Union Directive on the legal protection of biotechnological inventions. The Directive is not seeking to patent "the essence of life", nor will it prevent further research being carried out in the fields of any new patents. The Directive, which has been the subject of much discussion by many of the expert committees of the European parliament over the last few years or so, seeks only to harmonise across Europe that which is already patent practice. If the Directive is passed, it will not lead to patent rights in

biotechnology being any broader than exists at present. The Directive will not affect the scope of patent claims, and established mechanisms will remain in existence allowing patent decisions, which are felt to be too broad, to be challenged. The research exemption provision in patent legislation will continue to allow research on a patent invention without infringement. A strong intellectual property base in biotechnology will actually encourage innovation, promote the sharing of knowledge and stimulate further research, not prevent it. Without an effective and harmonised patent system across Europe for biotechnology inventions, it is most unlikely that there will continue to be the amount of high-risk investment in biomedical research needed for the new medicines and therapeutics of tomorrow.
DR JEFF KIPLING
Director of Science and Technology
The Association of British
Pharmaceutical Industry
London SW1

Outcast from the Continent
Sir: On the eve of the Amsterdam summit it may be salutary to reflect on the last occasion when we were in Holland negotiating the terms of a closer relationship with our European neighbours. In February 1651 the English

Parliament dispatched the Chief Justice, Oliver St John, and the veteran Yorkshire MP Walter Strickland to discuss political and economic union with the United Provinces; in June, after four months of strenuously pressing their case, they returned to London dismayed and empty-handed. The case for both economic and political union with the Netherlands had seemed overwhelming. Both countries were highly developed commercial nations; they were both Protestant; and both were republics: ideological and economic convergence were well-nigh perfect; and integrated they would enjoy superpower security and clout. There were no misgivings in the English Parliament, which had recently fought and defeated the king on the issue of sovereignty. St John and Strickland were in fact offered commercial union; but it was political union that they sought, and this the Dutch refused. Ideological, institutional and economic convergence were not enough; what we failed to measure up to was the moral test. We were a nation of regicides, the pariahs of Europe. In June 1997 we are, perhaps, in better moral shape. Let us not return from Holland yet again with our tail between our legs, once more the outcasts of the Continent. A prudent policy of "British interests first" (short-term and narrowly defined) is not the way ahead.
FRANK MUSGROVE
Beverly, East Yorkshire

Algerian election is no joke
Sir: Had my piece in *The Oldie* been the only article I had written on Algeria then Rob Brown's vicious attack on me (*Tabloid*, 9 June) might have been justified. But it was not. Had Mr Brown read *The Observer's* front page on 25 May 1997 "The blowtorch election that shames Britain" it might not have squared with his impression of me as a "joker". In this article, I wrote about the widespread use of torture, including blowtorches, in Algeria's police stations; the fears that the horrific massacres are being caused not by the Islamic terrorists but the military junta; and a shipment of defence equipment to Algeria by a British company. Not many jokes there. Had Mr Brown opened *The Observer* that Sunday he would have read a two-page spread inside, detailing how "the military is torturing and killing its way to victory over Islamists in the June poll." In this article I quoted a spokesman for Amnesty International: "the spokesman added that 58 journalists had been murdered since 1992. Not a single person has been brought to justice for the killings of these journalists. It does raise very serious questions about what is really happening." As to Mr Brown's objection to the tone of the *Oldie* piece, he may have a point. I am afraid I deal with my own terrors through laughter and a sense of the absurd. So does

Phil Davison, of *The Independent*, whom I took to hospital after he had been shot in Dubrovnik. Inside the Serb hospital, on the examination table, he joked about his suppurating leg wound in a way which would, no doubt, have offended Rob Brown. Had he been there. JOHN SWEENEY
Reporter
The Observer
London EC1

The challenge of living with MND
Sir: Jeremy Laurance's report (10 June) is misleading regarding the role of the Motor Neurone Disease Association in the Annie Lindsell case. As the only national organisation providing care and support to people living with Motor Neurone Disease (MND) we have a keen interest in the outcome of the case and the potential implications for our members. However, your readers should be aware that we are not in any way involved in the action being taken by Ms Lindsell and that our support has not been sought. MND is a rapidly progressive terminal condition affecting approximately 5,000 people in the UK. The cause is unknown and there is no cure. The challenge for people living with MND is how to maximise their quality of life up to the very end. The Annie Lindsell case will open up the debate about quality of life and we welcome the discussion which will follow.
GEORGE LEVY
Chief Executive
Motor Neurone Disease Association
Northampton

Wanted: a good glass of wine
Sir: Why can't I buy decent wine in a British pub? In an ordinary bar in mainland Europe I can buy very cheaply a glass of reasonable wine. Why not here? I know all the usual excuses: wine is cheaper in the country of origin; beer has always been the thing to drink in a pub; there are many good wine bars. The situation is still a disgrace. It is up to wine-drinkers to make themselves heard. Instead of avoiding the pub, or drinking something which is not first choice, it would be more effective to order the wine and reject it when it is below standard, as we would if the beer was awful.
GRAHAM BALFURY
Bristol

Conquest of Ceuta
Sir: Can someone please explain how Spain can expect to take back Gibraltar (report, 10 June) before it returns Ceuta to Morocco (or even to Portugal)? Gibraltar was ceded by treaty; Ceuta by conquest. JOHN EVANS
Marlow, Buckinghamshire

Post letters to *Letters to the Editor*, and include a daytime telephone number. Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk. E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret we are unable to acknowledge unpublished letters.

profile

The political luck of the youthful pretender

Little is known even to his fellow politicians about the convictions of William Hague, the tipsters' favourite to be elected leader of the Tory party but, says Donald Macintyre, that may be no accident

When, after that famous and abortive glass of champagne with Michael Howard, William Hague decided to run for the Tory leadership after all, Nick Thomas, an old friend and fellow Conservative from Oxford days, went straight down to the bookmaker's and put a five on his old chum becoming the next leader. Thomas made two calculations: "First, I thought, William was never a gambler so he must be pretty sure he can win," he said yesterday. And the other was that the 164-strong Conservative parliamentary party was a good deal smaller as a constituency than the Oxford University Conservative Association which Hague dominated as president in the early Eighties. For, says Thomas, apart from being the "best debater of his generation", already blessed with an extraordinarily sophisticated understanding of what the newish Thatcher government was all about, Hague as a machine politician was simply "the best". If he could dominate the faction-torn OUCA, he could probably get the better of a demoralised bunch of Tory MPs as well.

This little glimpse of Hague as a political organiser – he turned the so-called "Magdalen machine" based at his own college from a rather toff-dominated Tory faction into a formidable counterweight to the leftist Tory Reform Group, adds a little to an otherwise sketchy body of knowledge about the new pretender to the Tory crown. We know that he's balding. That he won a standing ovation with a dauntingly precocious speech to the 1977 Tory party conference. That he's engaged to be married to Fiona Jenkins, the pretty and well-connected civil servant who taught him the Welsh national anthem. That three years at Oxford left his South Yorkshire accent fairly intact. And that he's only 36. And that's about it – not much for a man now enthusiastically touted by his rapidly growing fan club as the man who can save the Conservative Party and storm into Downing Street as an even younger prime minister than Tony Blair in five years' time. It is a CV which leaves open at least two of the biggest questions about him: how did he get so far, so fast, and what does he believe?

It also leaves out one consistent feature of his rapid rise: enormous, enviable doses of luck. It is often said of politicians – it was frequently said of Margaret Thatcher – that the best make their own luck. And not even those Tories now opposing Hague doubt that he is clever. But he has also been lucky – as, to be fair, has Blair. Hague was noticed by Sir Leon Brittan on a visit to the Oxford

Union and plucked out of his post-university career at McKinsey's, the management consultants, to be a special adviser at the Treasury. For a time at McKinsey's he worked with Archie Norman, later Asda chairman and a likely root-and-branch reorganiser of the party machine if Hague wins. He thus became a natural in a strong field to take the seat in Richmond, Yorkshire when Brittan went to the European Commission.

The Richmond party was so traditionalist that a rival candidate was told he had been put on the shortlist because his wife had the "best legs". Answering local party executive questions, the still-single Hague was reported as saying something to the effect: "I've booked the church, I've hired the limo, I've planned the honeymoon. Now all I need is the girl. Lock up your daughters." (According to one account, his friend Alan Duncan made a similar speech several years later when he stood at Rutland, though Duncan is said to have no recollection of this.)

Hague had the extra good fortune at the by-election to have the SDP as his main rival at a time when the alliance was in the throes of its post-general election self-destruction. Hague romped home. He was also lucky that John Redwood resigned in 1995 to take on John Major. Luckier still that Major, remembering his own meteoric rise from a middle-ranking social security post, replaced Redwood in the Cabinet job of Welsh Secretary with Hague. He could not have foreseen that Michael Portillo would have lost Enfield Southgate and deprive the right wing of its most charismatic contender. Nor, finally, that John Redwood rather than Michael Howard or Peter Lilley came top of the three hard-right contenders, with the result that the right split in his own favour.

But there was skill – and ambition – as well as luck. Hague grew up during the peak of corporate union power in the Seventies in the People's Republic of South Yorkshire. The son of a small soft drinks businessman, it wasn't difficult for him to develop antipathy to the left and, according to one of his oldest friends, he was sporting blue rosettes during local elections at Arthur Scargill's plumed. "He had no compunction about saying 'I don't know about you guys but I'm a Conservative'." He was able to have strong and for the area quite unusual convictions – while still staying one of the lads. What's striking, moreover, in the famous 1977 speech, delivered at the age of 16, is precisely the neo-liberal, proto-Thatcherite tone, with its call for people to be "freed" from state interference, and its critique

of previous Tory governments for not doing more to restore the "liberty of the individual" robbed by Labour. But herein lies one of the enigmas of the Hague career. Was this conviction, as his supporters claim, or an acute sense of the direction of the prevailing political wind?

At least one university contemporary remembers him being "fashionably" rather than ferociously right wing when he went from the local Waltham-on-Avon comprehensive to Oxford, his party conference fame travelling before him. But another, Andrew Sullivan, now editor of the right-of-centre *New Republic* political journal, insists that Hague does have deep convictions though he tends to keep them "well concealed". At that time, he says, "there were a lot of us who were very sympathetic to Thatcherism when not everyone in the Tory party was, but who also saw the need to reach out." But Sullivan, like others, attests to a strong streak of social liberalism. Sullivan yesterday recalled him as Union president holding a debate on the age of consent for gays (he would later vote in Parliament for the age to be reduced to 16).

He was certainly a brilliant debater – with one contemporary remembering a scathing, if unmistakably undergraduate speech in which he excoriated the SDP which he predicted would "degenerate into the heterosexual wing of the Liberal Party". He was popular, clever and energetic. According to Sullivan: "Because he is such a smart politician people overlook that he has a real brain. He got his PPE First without any apparent effort."

The Sullivan analysis notwithstanding, opponents in both the Redwood and the Clarke camps will continue to make much of the argument that Hague's beliefs on many topics are if not unfounded, at least unknown. In a striking example of the detail in which the leadership war is now being waged, Hague is now under fire from the Redwood camp for allegedly allowing public spending to rise when he was Welsh Secretary. While Redwood, so the claim goes, had reduced grant aid to the Welsh Development Agency from £69.5m to £25m, Hague allowed it to rise to £84.7m in 1997-98, largely by being more reluctant to sanction land sales.

On the Tory left, however, MPs who know Hague claim to be baffled about what his views are on important economic issues. "What are his real views about public spending or injection of private funding into the welfare state, or the NHS or local government?" asks one who has known him for more than a decade. If I look up the record on Ken Clarke or John Redwood I can find the answers but with William I can't.

There have also been claims that Hague has been equivocating about his attitude to Europe and the single currency. It is certainly true that he strengthened his Euro-sceptic credentials as



one of a group – of which Michael Howard was the acknowledged leader – which tried to persuade John Major within the Cabinet to end the "wait and see" policy on EMU. And it's true that he was impressed by a visit to Japan in which he reportedly found that several prominent businessmen were worried about any idea that the UK would leave the EU, while being privately baffled that the British would want to sacrifice their currency.

Both left and right opponents claim to have been bemused by his appearances during the current campaign at both the right-wing '92 Group and the left-of-centre Positive European Group. At the '92, he is said to have avoided answering a question from the hard-right Julian Lewis about why, a few days before he announced that he was against the single currency in principle, Nigel Evans, a prominent member of his campaign team, had said he didn't know what Hague's views were. And at the pro-European meeting he apparently softened the wording of his opposition to the single currency under questioning from the fiercely pro-European John Gummer.

No doubt this can be put down to the needs of running a successful campaign as the unity candidate. But because he is up against Redwood and

Clarke, two conviction politicians who lack nothing in political bravery, the "where's the beef" charge will continue to run. Particularly since the most prominent original figures in his campaign team are, in the words of one opponent, "senior emulifiers" of the party rather than leading exponents of economic policy. And for all the campaign team's attempts to explain it away, John Major – and some other grandees – were distinctly unimpressed by Hague's suggestion that the former Prime Minister had presided over an era of fudge. It looked, and still looks, like a naked attempt to fend off accusations that he is "John Major with a PPE First".

The fact is that while Hague may be more right wing than his left-wing backers realise, he remains something of a political *tabula rasa*. His opponents continue to doubt whether he made the right decision that night when he returned from the Howard pact to a welter of messages on his answering machine urging him to run. "It could just be too early for him," said one fellow-MP. "Yes, if he wins he could turn out to be the greatest prime minister since Pitt the Younger. And he could find himself, after the next election, an ex-leader of the Tory party at 41."

Something to clap about: William Hague is hopeful of becoming the next Tory leader and an even younger prime minister than Tony Blair

Photograph: Peter Byrne/Guzzell

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Offer also applies to spouses

We talked pigs. They go bang, said Gerry

Gerry Adams likes the way PG Wodehouse writes, it seems, so yesterday I brought you the first half of a new Wodehouse story about Gerry Adams. I didn't know what the girl was talking about. I suspected she didn't either. I suspected she might have picked it up off the Irish chap.

"Dash it Jeeves, must you always talk in parables?" I said, but he had already gone. I strolled on for a while through the ample grounds of Wolfram Towers, which are large enough to put many a smaller county to shame, until a certain fragrance told me that I was nearing pig country. I found the pen in which Sleeping Beauty was living up to the first half of her name at least and was just musing on the extraordinary way in which many noblemen will lose their hearts to a pig or horse or even car, when they seem not to notice their wives any more, when I became aware of a presence beside me. I turned and found the sinister shadow of Mr Gerry Adams.

"Ah, the Irish cousin!" I said, before remembering Jeeves's admonition to treat this Irish Johnny with caution. So I said nothing more.

"The trouble with pigs," said Gerry, "especially very large pigs, is that they get build-up. Enormous build-up of gas."



Myles Kingston

He looked at me with innocent spectacles. "Sometimes the gas is so bad that the pig blows up. They can destroy a whole piggery. Bang! Just like that."

"Golly! A piggery blown up? Without warning?" "You might get a coded telephone warning first," said Gerry, turning on me the full gaze of his unblinking spectacles. I didn't think I knew what a coded phone call was, so I thought I should change the subject pronto.

"Any idea who Polonius was?" I said, saying the first thing that came to my mind. "A man who was interfering and had to be got rid of," he said. Life seemed to lose its sparkle when this chap was talking. Of course I didn't know then who he was. Nor did I know that in the next few days the piggery would get blown up, that Jeeves would turn out to be an intelligence Johnny, and Kate an undercover agent, that Mr Adams would mysteriously vanish and that Lord Wolfram would be so broken-hearted he would try to borrow money off me. There are times when a chap fervently wishes he had gone to play golf instead.

هكذا من الأصل

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to be
judged — is
to get half-
a-million
single
mothers out
to work

business & city

Business news desk: tel 0171-293 2636 fax 0171-293 2098
BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

Government seeks union advice on windfall tax pitfalls

Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

The Government has sought advice from the country's largest union on how to stop privatised utilities cutting costs in order to pay the windfall tax. The proposals from the 1.3 million strong public service union Unison ranged from exhortation through tax breaks to outright compulsion.

The union is concerned that some

of the utilities are prepared to lower the standards of customer service and make employees redundant in order to offset the burden of the levy.

As fresh evidence of the Government's readiness to take on board the views of unions in framing policies towards business, Whitehall officials asked Unison for suggestions on how cost-cutting could be avoided.

In a letter to the Treasury, Mike Jeram, head of energy at the union, says that full protection for em-

ployees would require special provision in the legislation. The law would need to give ministers or a regulator the power to make "enforceable directions" where the tax is thought to have resulted directly or indirectly in redundancies.

Mr Jeram however accepts that such a provision might prove difficult for the Government. An alternative might be an attempt to exercise influence over the companies by "making the appropriate

statement in the House" - a suggestion which the Government might feel is the least expensive and controversial.

Another method would be to offer companies rebates on the tax if they protected existing employment levels and recruited new staff, possibly trainees. This approach would give the companies incentive not to reduce their current staffing levels and to develop security packages for their employees," Mr Jeram said.

There was a sting in the tail for companies however. Mr Jeram said the rebate policy would allow the Government to pitch the levy at a higher level on the grounds that companies had been offered the means to reduce their share.

The Union official said the union could develop the idea, in conjunction with the Trade Union Research Unit at Ruskin College, Oxford, if the Treasury thought it had merit. Speaking at Unison's annual con-

ference in Brighton this week, Rodney Bickerstaffe, general secretary of the union, warned the government that it would be a "nonsense" to impose the levy to create 250,000 jobs for the unemployed, if it led to redundancies in companies on which it was imposed. He urged ministers to ensure that some of the tax was diverted to protect jobs in the public service.

Under the Government's strategy of European-style "social partner-

ship" it is inevitable that ministers have also canvassed opinions from management. Companies are likely to fight tooth and nail against any extension of the regulatory regime or any interventionism through tax incentives, bearing in mind that the levy could be at a higher level in order to accommodate rebates.

Details of the tax - expected to raise at least £3 billion - are to be revealed in Gordon Brown's first Budget on 2 July.

ITV should be one company, says Robinson

Cathy Newman

The nine ITV companies will need to merge into a single operating group within a decade, according to Gerry Robinson, chairman of Granada Group, the leisure and media company which is seeking to dominate Channel 3 broadcasting.

After a week of talks and mergers in the television industry, Mr Robinson said yesterday he believed one company would, within 10 years, control ITV in order to compete with the increasingly cut-throat television market.

He added: "If ITV were started now it would look a ludicrous and costly structure to compete with Sky, Channel 4 and Channel 5."

He added that the Government had so far taken a "freer, more logical stance on media ownership", Mr Robinson, who is a firm Labour supporter, said the new Government had taken a very sensible attitude towards relaxing current legislation, which prevents companies owning more than 15 per cent of the UK's total television audience.

However, a spokesman for the Department of National Heritage, poured cold water on Mr Robinson's comments, and said: "There is no immediate imperative to change the current media ownership regulations. It's hard to see how a single licence holder could deliver diversity."

Charles Allen, Granada's chief executive, backed Mr Robinson's claims that the UK needed to foster a "strong, vibrant" television industry controlled by sizeable players. He said ITV should mirror the

structure of Channel 5, with major operators taking stakes in a single holding company.

City analysts had mixed views about Granada's views. Anthony de Larrinaga, media analyst at Panmure Gordon, said: "I'm sure Michael Green [chairman of Carlton Communications] thinks the same thing and wants to be boss as well. If the Independent Television Commission wanted one commercial mainstream licence it would have created it. But the ITC

“If ITV were started now it would look a ludicrous and costly structure to compete with the others”

hasn't decided to abandon the regional structure of Channel 3."

However, Matthew Horsman, media analyst at Henderson Crosthwaite, said "at some point down the road" there would be an "ITV plc". He added: "The inability of the franchisees to work together has held ITV back. At some point there will be a single proposition to compete against the national Channel 4 and Channel 5 franchises." Mr Horsman added that the restructuring and appointment of a chief executive at ITV Network Centre signalled the first steps towards a single Channel 3 company.

Granada's comments come a few days after it announced it was in talks with its neighbouring franchise, Yorkshire-Tyne Tees Television. Sources said yesterday that Granada would want to save around £20m over two years if the deal with Yorkshire went ahead. The majority of Yorkshire's production facilities would remain at Leeds, according to Mr Robinson.

His enthusiasm for further integration followed swiftly on the heels of Tuesday's £105m merger of Scottish Television and Grampian Television. One analyst suggested that Mr Robinson and Gus Macdonald, chairman of Scottish Media Group and also a Labour supporter, had proceeded with merger talks only after "sounding out" the Government's views on further consolidation.

Unveiling a 33 per cent rise in profits before tax and exceptional items to £243m for the 26 weeks to the end of March, Mr Robinson said the company would invest £200m in TV channels and programming in the next five years. Analysts said Granada was attempting to signal to the stock market that it was not achieving the rating it deserved considering the size of its media holdings.

Mr Robinson kept his options open on a demerger of the group's media operations. He said that while Granada would not be spinning off its media division in the short term, the company would always keep it in mind as a possibility.

Granada was operating profits on last year's Forte acquisition of 351 per cent, from £25.8m to £116.4m.

Comment, page 25

Nationwide chief slams conversions

Tom Stevenson
Financial Editor

The head of Britain's largest remaining mutually owned building society launched a scathing attack yesterday on the "illusion of wealth" that conversion windfalls had created. Brian Davis, chief executive of Nationwide, confirmed the society's commitment to mutualism and said he was confident of fighting off a challenge from rebel members who were trying to push through a flotation of the society.

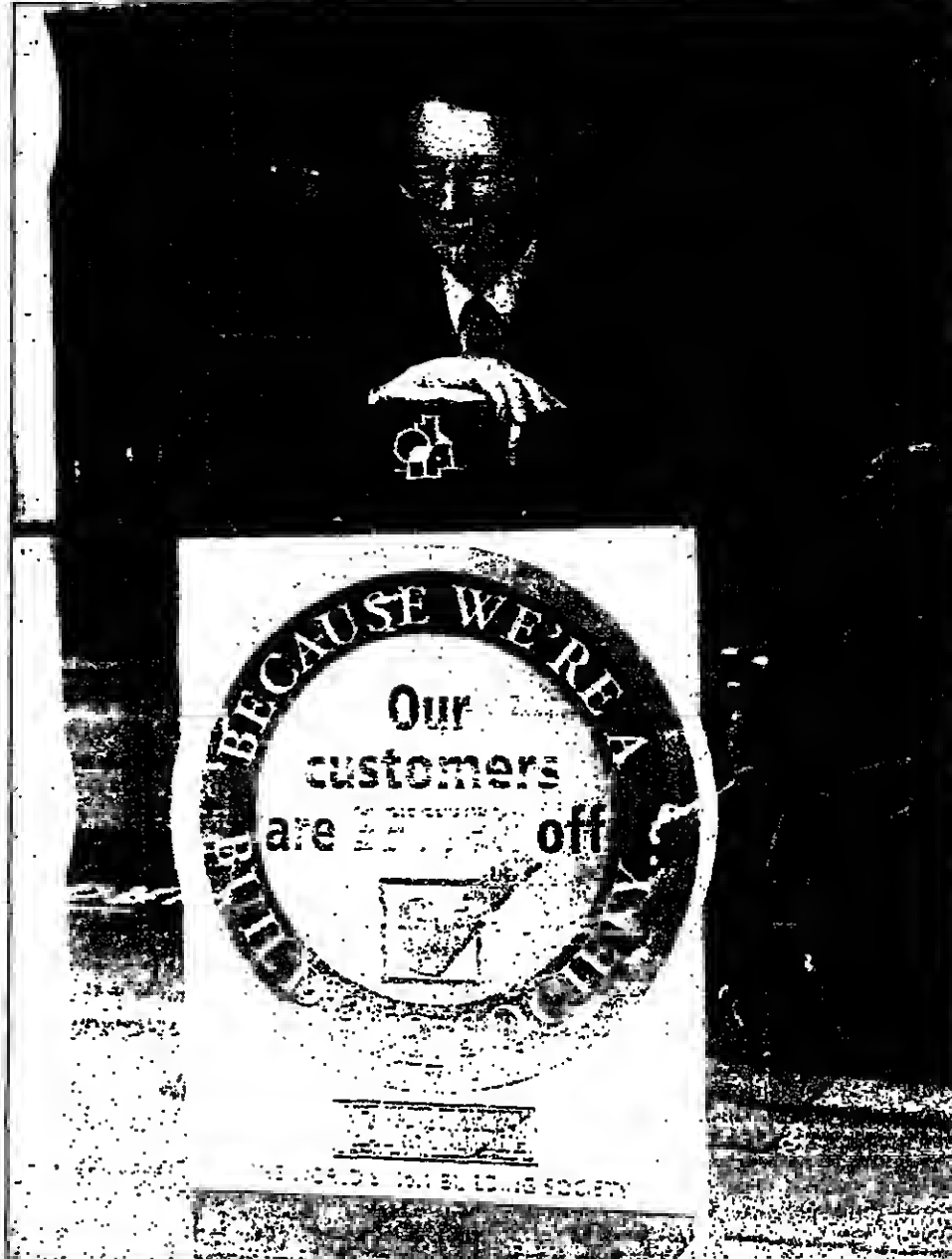
He said: "Conversion does not create wealth. It is like a conjuror pulling rabbits out of a hat. We are all amused by the trick but no one believes he has created anything. The societies that have become banks have spent £500m of their customers' money on the conversions."

Profits at Nationwide slumped last year as it carried out its promise of returning £200m to its members through keener savings and mortgage rates than its demutualising peers. Mr Davis said: "Our competitors would love us to convert but we intend to stay on as a building society and bring them increasing competition."

The society said it had returned the funds while improving its balance sheet strength, improving its efficiency and increasing its share of the mortgage lending market. It was confident that record would allow it to see off a challenge at its annual meeting from a group of carpet-bagging dissidents. The rebels are attempting to have five of their number appointed to Nationwide's board and to push through a flotation or takeover of the society. They are promising members hand-outs of at least £1,000.

Nationwide announced 18 months ago it was committed to remaining a mutual society and yesterday restated its intention to put the interests of customers first. With more than 7 million customers and 685 branches, Nationwide is the country's leading building society following the flotation of Halifax.

Announcing pre-tax profits of £264.8m for the year to April,



Reflective mood: Brian Davis said conversion windfalls created an 'illusion of wealth'

a 33 per cent reduction on the previous year's £395.6m. Mr Davis spoke out strongly for the mutual movement: "We can occasionally look beyond personal greed and are committed to rewarding our customers with tangible long-term benefits. Over a period which has seen

many institutions abandoning their mutual status, I am delighted with the role Nationwide has played in preserving real choice and competition."

Mr Davis said the attractions of the Nationwide offer had been made clear since the release of funds that had been

locked into rival societies in the run-up to their flotations. Around £700m of savings had flowed into Nationwide accounts in May. The average deposit of £11,000 suggested savers were not carpet-baggers seeking the next windfall, Mr Davis said.

News Corp signs satellite TV deal

David Usborne
New York

After months of frustration, and one deal that imploded, Rupert Murdoch has secured a means of floating his satellite television service above the market that has hitherto eluded him: the United States.

An agreement was announced yesterday between Mr Murdoch's News Corporation and the owners of the PrimeStar satellite broadcaster to restructure the company with News Corp emerging with a 30 per cent non-voting stake.

In return, News Corp and its partner, MCI Communications, will contribute to the newly public company, to be named PrimeStar Inc, satellite assets valued at \$1.1bn (£672m) as well as valuable transmission sites and federal licences.

Left with 70 per cent of the company would be original PrimeStar partners Time Warner, with about 22 per cent, and Comcast, Cox Communications and MediaOne, with about 6 per cent each. PrimeStar is the second-largest satellite broadcasting service in the US after DirecTV, owned by General Motors.

The deal essentially rescues Mr Murdoch's satellite plans for the US which were left in tatters after the collapse six weeks ago of an early joint venture agreement with EchoStar of Denver, Colorado. The death of that deal has left Mr Murdoch in a morass of litigation.

"I couldn't quite say this is a replacement, but because that deal [with EchoStar] didn't work out, this is the next one we're doing," a News Corp spokesman said yesterday.

In the meantime there were reports yesterday that Mr Murdoch was on the cusp of finalising a \$1.7bn deal to acquire one of the largest cable operators in the United States, International Family Entertainment.

IFE is owned by Pat Robertson, the Christian fundamentalist leader who once ran an independent candidacy for the US presidency. Its principal asset is the Family Channel, which is the ninth-largest cable channel in the US.

The PrimeStar manoeuvre also re-establishes peace between Mr Murdoch and the US cable industry that had furiously opposed his EchoStar agreement. The other main partners in the new PrimeStar all have substantial cable interests, with Time Warner being the lead player.

With EchoStar, Mr Murdoch had hoped to launch a type of satellite service that would have directly challenged the grip of the cable industry on most US television viewers.

Unemployment down to 1.6 million

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

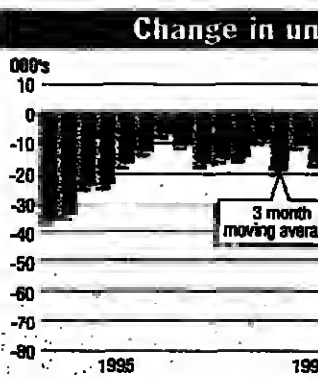
Headline unemployment fell to a seven-year low of just over 1.6 million in May. But the decline was the smallest for nine months as the distortion caused by the introduction of the Jobseekers' Allowance (JSA) dropped out of the figures. The smaller-than-expected fall, along with figures showing unchanged growth in earnings in the year to April, eased analysts' fears that the tighter job market would lead to higher inflation.

The reassurance came on the eve of the Chancellor's Mansion House speech, in which he is expected to flesh out earlier indications that the inflation target will be at least as tough as the present 2.5 per cent ceiling. "The message to the Bank of England is keep your finger on the interest-rate trigger but don't squeeze yet," said Adam Cole, UK economist at James Capel.

Andrew Smith, Employment Minister, yesterday welcomed the

latest decline in the number of unemployment benefit claimants but said there was still "much to do" on the joblessness front.

The Treasury is considering how to implement the Government's manifesto pledge to create a fully independent statistical office, as part of the comprehensive spending review announced by the chief secretary, Alistair Darling, yesterday. Such a body would be free to replace the discredited claimant count measure of unemployment.



The Government believes the trend decline in the number of claimants is about 30,000-35,000 a month, rather than the 62,000 average during the six months in which the JSA was introduced. This is still higher than the 15,000-20,000 a month trend seen in mid-1996.

The more reliable, survey-based measure of unemployment has also shown a faster rate of improvement, falling by 111,000 in November-February, compared to a 184,000

drop in the claimant measure in the same months.

Other statistics in yesterday's batch confirmed the pick-up during the past year. Employment showed a robust increase of 86,000 in the first quarter, and all were full-time jobs. The number of people in Government training schemes fell by 10,000 to 180,000, the lowest for 12 years.

The jobs figures fit into the broad picture of strong growth in the economy, but reassured the financial markets that the overheating would not get out of hand.

"The labour market data look far less threatening to the inflation target than they did two months ago," said John O'Sullivan of NatWest Markets.

The number of people claiming unemployment benefit fell by 18,400 in May, compared to a drop of 56,400 in April.

Equally important to the City was the unchanged rate of growth in underlying average earnings. This stayed at 4.5 per cent in April for the third month running.

Hambros report into Co-op bid may not be made public

Tom Stevenson

The truth about Hambros' role in Andrew Regan's failed bid for the Co-operative Wholesale Society (CWS) may never emerge after Sir Chips Keswick, chief executive, said yesterday an independent investigation by solicitors Norton Rose might not be made public.

He said the report was expected by the end of the month but might only be seen by the bank and its regulators.

He was speaking as Hambros, one of the City's last remaining independent investment banks, reported more than tripled pre-tax profits of £64.7m (£20.6m) for the year to March, mainly thanks to a £35m turnaround at the group's 52 per cent-owned Hambros Countrywide chain of estate agents.

An undisclosed payment to the CWS, thought to be around £1m, was included in a £9.2m exceptional charge that also covered the costs of a strategic

review of the group. The payment followed an unreserved apology from group chairman Lord Hambro for the bank's support of the discredited £1.2bn bid and the part it played in distributing stolen documents around the City.

Sir Chips said Hambros would "take as soon as possible any action that needs to be taken to ensure we preserve and then enhance the good name which is so important to us. We believe that this will enable us to put the matter behind us."

Peter Large, the corporate financier who headed the Hambros team advising Mr Regan, has temporarily stepped down from his position and is helping the Norton Rose inquiry.

Turning to the results, Sir Chips admitted that profits from the core banking business remained "inadequate" and said he remained committed to seeing a return to "satisfactory and sustainable" returns. Profits of £10m from banking were

sharply higher than the previous year's £500,000 but they represented an underlying fall before lower bad debt provisions from £36.7m to £20.4m. The return on capital in the business was at least three times too low, Sir Chips said.

Hambros Countrywide returned a profit of £31m compared to the previous year's £4m loss as the number of transactions handled by the group rose by 28 per cent, much better than the 9 per cent volume increase in the market as a whole.

Investment profits slipped from the previous year's record profit of £28.8m to £25.2m while Insurance Services retreated marginally from £11.1m to £10.9m.

Comment, page 25

STOCK MARKETS									
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	YTD High	YTD Low	YTD Change	YTD %
FTSE 100	4724.80	-14.80	-0.3	4739.50	4056.60	3.48			
FTSE 250	4506.90	+9.60	+0.2	4729.40	4462.00	3.93			
FTSE 350	2282.30	-4.90	-0.2	2287.20	2017.90	3.51			
FTSE SmallCap	2281.10	+1.73	+0.1	2374.20	2179.29	3.09			
FTSE All-Share	2237.85	-4.31	-0.2	2242.16	1989.78	3.48			
New York	7555.13	+15.86	+0.2	7599.27	5032.94	1.70			
DAX	20289.93	-242.62	-1.2	20611.56	17303.85	0.80			
Hong Kong	14421.52	-18.19	-0.1	14980.90	12065.17	2.98			
Frankfurt	3677.43	+12.42	+0.3	3695.29	2848.77	1.49			

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES									
Short sterling*					UK medium gilt				
Index	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year	Index	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
UK	6.47	7.06	7.11	8.03	7.17	8.14			
US	5.62	5.12	6.35	6.97	6.93	7.10			
Japan	0.56	0.67	2.40	3.24					
Germany	3.00	3.25	5.80	6.54	6.58				

CURRENCIES

The figure contains three line charts, each with a vertical axis representing an index and a horizontal axis representing time from Monday (M) to Friday (F). The first chart, titled 'Pound', shows a line fluctuating between 1.60 and 1.65. The second chart, titled 'Dollar', shows a line fluctuating between 0.90 and 1.00. The third chart, titled 'Yen', shows a line starting at 100 and ending at approximately 110, with a significant dip in the middle.

Pound

	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
\$/£ (London)	1.6393	+0.51c	1.5355
\$/A\$ (New York)	1.6375	+0.05c	1.5355
DM/£ (London)	2.8141	+2.21p	2.3989
¥/£ (London)	124.716	+0.46	167.084
\$/Index	99.7	+0.7	86.0

Dollar

	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
£/¥ (London)	0.0100	-0.19	0.0513
£/¥ (New York)	0.0107	-0.02	0.0513
DM/£ (London)	1.7187	+0.02c	1.5363
¥/£ (London)	112.680	+0.07	109.495
\$/Index	102.1	+0.2	97.5

OTHER INDICATORS

	Yesterday	Yesterday's chg	Year Ago	Index	Latest	Yr Ago	Next Ftg
Oil Brent \$	17.73	+0.05	18.03	RPI	156.3±2.4pc	150.9	19 Jun
Gold \$	344.05	+0.00	384.20	GDP	109.7±2.6pc	107.0	25 Jul

OTHER INDICATORS									
Index	Yesterday	Day's chg	Year Ago	Index	Yesterday	Day's chg	Year Ago	Index	Yesterday
Oil Brent \$	17.73	+0.05	18.03	RPI	158.3	+2.4pc	150.9	19 Jun	
Gold \$	344.05	+0.00	384.20	GDP	108.7	+2.8pc	107.0	25 Jul	
Gold £	210.16	+0.28	250.21	Base Rates	-	-6.25pc	6.75		

مکان من الاصل

Labour's sacred cows unlikely to face the axe

COMMENT

'No other Government had achieved a comprehensive inventory before, Mr Darling said. This is technically true, but the minister must have had his fingers crossed behind his back'

Trumpets were wound in the House of Commons yesterday as Alistair Darling, chief secretary to the Treasury, announced a comprehensive review of public spending. Well, not quite, but his rhetorical flourish demanded the accompaniment. Mr Darling promised that every department would start from a zero base in building up new spending plans. Every item of expenditure would have to be justified in terms of the Government's objectives. Whew! These guys really mean business, don't they?

But hold on a moment. How new is all this, and will it actually make any difference? The Government is right to carry out this review. It is right to scrutinise spending in the light of its priorities. But the triumphalism of the announcement underplays the Conservative government's own efforts to carry out a genuine review of public expenditure and overplays the scope for and prospect of radical switches in spending.

One of the innovations claimed by Mr Darling was an inventory of departmental assets, with a view to selling off any the Government does not need. No other Government had achieved a comprehensive inventory before, he said. This is technically true, but the minister must have had his fingers crossed behind his back. The work is already under way as part of the shift towards more commercially orientated accounts for the public sector initiated by Kenneth Clarke. The former Chancellor's decision to move to "resource accounting", as it is known, will have radical consequences for judging public expenditure.

Actually altering public expenditure is another matter. Pamela Meadows, a former senior civil servant who now directs the Policy Studies Institute, has pointed out that when her department, Employment, underwent its last fundamental expenditure review, the idea of axing government training schemes for the jobless was never considered. Yet all studies have shown that these schemes do nobody any good. Her point is that it is almost impossible to be radical about areas where ministers have invested political capital.

The chances are obviously better for a new Government. But even New Labour has its sacred cows. Will it axe all Government-funded training schemes? Absolutely not: it is offering training as one of four options for the young unemployed. Will it make pensioners pay for prescriptions? Not without a serious tussle between Gordon Brown and Frank Dobson at the Department of Health. The Chancellor and his team need to combine some sensible expectations about what the new comprehensive review can achieve with the stirring rhetoric of matching spending to the people's priorities.

ITV's consolidation has gone far enough

Every businessman aspires to monopoly, of the late Roy Wat, former chairman of Thames Water, used to say. Those who tell you otherwise, he would insist, are just being disingenuous. He is as right now as he

was then, of course, only our leading industrialists have since learnt to dress up the pursuit of monopoly in rather more seductive language. There's scarcely an industry worth the name that doesn't talk constantly these days about the need for "consolidation". If you want us to provide a decent service capable of competing internationally, then we must be allowed to consolidate in the home market, is the general thrust of the argument. Usually it is expressed in rather more subtle and beguiling terms than this, but that's roughly how it goes.

So it was yesterday as Gerry Robinson, chairman of Granada, became the latest businessman to beat the consolidation drum. ITV has already been allowed a high degree of it, with an original 15 franchises in 1993 now owned by just nine holding companies. But Mr Robinson wants to go further, much further. He wants ITV to be allowed to consolidate into just one consortium company, with ownership shared by ITV's present media barons. The present structure, he says, is ludicrous, costly and incapable of competing long term against Sky, the BBC, cable, and Channels Four and Five. Let us consolidate, he argues, and we would then have a superior service and superior programming which Britain plc could sell to the world.

Familiar stuff, but actually even more tenuous a justification for more consolidation when applied to TV than most other industries. ITV already provides its viewers with a handsome return, even after payments to the Exchequer, and it still takes the vast bulk

of TV advertising in this country. Furthermore, it already produces good, high-quality programming capable of competing with the best that others can offer. There is no evidence this programming would get any better, or that any more money would be devoted to it, if the industry were allowed further to consolidate. Nor, except perhaps in the case of high-cost period drama, would demand overseas be improved for what would almost certainly continue to be largely parochial British-based product.

Mr Robinson is talking baloney, though nobody can blame him for at least trying it on. He's not the first, nor will he be the last. Sky, cable and others may eventually eat sufficiently into ITV's traditional market to justify a rethink, but that time has not yet come. For the moment, consolidation in ITV has gone as far as it ought to.

Hambros must come clean about the Co-op

Sir Chips Keswick played a predictably straight bat yesterday over what Hambros has coyly taken to calling the "CWS matter". A distraction, dear boy, that we'll be able to put behind us just as soon as that wretched independent report is out of the way. Can't say if we'll publish the damn thing, of course, and, so sorry, can't say how much that respectable little episode cost us.

It is easy to be seduced by the patrician grace of Hambros' chief executive, but dig-

ging the bank out of this particular pickle is going to demand a little less charm and a great deal more clarity. Hambros jumped into bed with Andrew Regan because it was desperate for business in its struggling corporate finance arm. If it is to gain better quality work than that, the least it must do is come completely clean about its mistakes.

One thing is for certain, the Regan camp will be pressing for publication of the Norton Rose report. Rightly or wrongly, it feels it has been made the scapegoat for this shabby affair and it won't rest until Hambros' role is out in the open. If it is all going to come out in the wash anyway, it is surely better to bite the bullet and issue a voluntary mea culpa.

Even then, Hambros remains in a bind. The sharp rise in its profits last year owed more to the booming housing market than any improvement in its core banking business. Strip out a fall in bad debts and banking profits were well down. Both insurance and investments were also lower. The circling vulture of Jim Mellon's Regent Pacific is unlikely to be impressed by what even Sir Chips describes as wholly inadequate returns.

It is frankly hard to see how Hambros can develop a meaningful role in the modern City. One of the reasons the bid for the CWS failed was the bank's inability to secure finance for the takeover quickly enough to pre-empt the society's highly effective defence. If it cannot secure funds then all it can offer is the quality of its advice. Backing Lantic Trust was hardly a ringing endorsement of its judgement.

A radio-based telecoms contender set up five years ago is signing up customers fast. Michael Harrison reports

Ionica set for £625m float to do battle with BT

Ionica, the company that is setting up a rival domestic telephone network to British Telecom based on innovative radio technology, is to go public next month through a stock market flotation that will value the business at £625m.

The company, formed five years ago by a science graduate from Imperial College, intends to raise £125m through a listing in London and New York. About 20 per cent of the company will be offered to investors. At the same time Ionica plans to raise a further £200m in debt to help build out its network, taking the total amount raised so far to £760m.

The company's 350 shareholders, who include Yorkshire Electricity, Northern Electric, 3i and a number of other venture capitalists, investment trusts and banks, have agreed not to sell any of their shares. In addition, Ionica's eight largest shareholders have signed a lock-in agreement which prevents them selling any shares for a year after the flotation.

The flotation will make Nigel Playford, Ionica's chief executive, worth £31.5m on paper. He will hold a stake of 5 per cent after the offer. Mr Playford and Ionica's four other executive directors who together started the business in 1992, own 7.3 per cent of the company. The 800 staff own a further 3 per cent.

The Cambridge-based company began offering a service to residential and small business customers in the Anglia region a year ago and extended its service to the Midlands in February. So far it has 24,000 customers out of the 1.2 million homes passed and has achieved a connection rate of nearly 3 per

cent in its launch area. It aims to achieve a market share of 5 per cent by 2001, by which time its network of base stations and exchanges should cover 80 per cent of the country.

But a study published yesterday by its financial advisers, SBC Warburg, estimates that it could have captured 10 per cent of the market by 2004. On that basis SBC Warburg puts Ionica's enterprise value - equity plus debt - at between £860m and £1.3bn and forecasts a pre-tax profit of £82m by 2001-2002. In the 12 months to the end of March this year it made a loss of £44m on income of £15m.

Ionica's selling point to investors is that its up-front capital expenditure is a fraction of that incurred by cable companies because it incurs costs only when it signs up a customer. Its biggest capital cost is the radio aerial fitted to the outside wall of each subscriber's home. From there calls connect to a remote base station in the local area - usually on top of a high building. The station is connected to an Ionica telephone exchange which is in turn connected to the national phone network.

SBC Warburg's research puts the cost of connecting each Ionica customer at just £16 compared with £800 for BT and £500 for cable subscribers. Mr Playford says: "The reason shares in the cable operators have done so badly is that they made promises they have not been able to keep. We can break even with 2-3 per cent of the market and make our shareholders very happy people indeed with 5 per cent."

Ionica's strategy, however, is to compete not with the cable companies but with BT. Its charges are fixed at 10 per cent below those of BT. Each time BT cuts its charges, Ionica follows suit.

"Although price is part of the message, there is no point just marketing yourself as a cheap telephone company. We sell



Waving to the crowd: The flotation will make Nigel Playford, Ionica's chief executive, worth £31.5m on paper

Photograph: FT

difficult background and Ionica's high-technology image, the company's main focus of attention is on a high-profile saturation marketing campaign. Its advertising budget, at £20m this year compares with the £150m BT spends but BT has 27 million customers. Two-thirds of its customers

customers, Ionica has approached the market the other way around. It operates a local loop and plugs its calls into whichever trunk operator is offering the best and most competitive service.

Mr Playford is not worried by about BT's campaign to win back

merely to planning one, Mr Playford is aware of the pitfalls that may lie ahead.

But as he surveys the landscape, he cannot spot any obvious disaster waiting to happen. "When we started in 1992 we had no technology, no money, no staff, no customers, no interconnection and no number portability. Now we can tick every one of those boxes. If we do no more than we are doing now we will do fantastically well."

"We have access to all the important capital markets. I can't see any new technology coming along that will zap us and the market is unlikely to be flooded with new entrants because there isn't the space available on the radio spectrum. BT could hurt us on price but to do that it would have to chop off its own feet and take the pain as well, but why would it want to do that when we are only aiming for 5 per cent of the market?"

As Ionica prepares for the scrutiny that goes with a public listing and adjusts to the demands imposed by actually running a business as opposed

to merely planning one, Mr Playford is aware of the pitfalls that may lie ahead.

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Ionica as a high quality telecoms provider. Because it is delivered by digital radio we don't have the costs of digging up the streets to get to people so we can pass on those cost savings to customers. Copper local loop is a physical asset which deteriorates with time and is also labour-intensive. Ours is a low maintenance network.

Despite Mr Playford's sci-

ence background and Ionica's high-technology image, the company's main focus of attention is on a high-profile saturation marketing campaign. Its advertising budget, at £20m this year compares with the £150m BT spends but BT has 27 million customers. Two-thirds of its customers

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US tobacco talks stall as BAT voices concerns

David Osborne
New York

The high-stakes negotiations for a truce in the tobacco litigation wars in the United States may have become snagged on fears expressed by British American Tobacco on the long-term consequences of a deal for its world-wide business.

The marathon talks between the attorneys general of some 36 states suing the industry to recoup the costs of treating smoking-related diseases and representatives of the companies themselves broke up unexpectedly late on Tuesday. It is unclear when they might resume.

Under way since early April, the negotiations are aimed at reaching an agreement under which the companies would be protected from unlimited numbers of lawsuits in return for paying out as much as \$300bn (£183bn) for the establishment of a "standing smokers' compensation fund."

Sources said that worries

have mounted inside the industry camp over a critical element to the deal that would recognise the right of the Food and Drug Administration to regulate the levels of nicotine in tobacco products. The logical conclusion could be a ban on nicotine as an ingredient altogether.

Most unreservedly, reportedly, is BAT, which is the parent company of Brown & Williamson, the third-largest cigarette manufacturer in the US after Philip Morris and RJ Reynolds. BAT was cited as having backed out of the talks for the time being while it reassesses its position.

Part of BAT's calculation appears to be the possible consequences beyond the US of the precedent of nicotine-level controls. While a relatively small player in the US, with 17 per cent of the market, BAT is the second-largest cigarette manufacturer world-wide. A ripple effect in other world markets could be highly damaging.

As both sides strain to see whether the talks can be sal-

vaged, the chief executive of BAT, Martin Broughton, was believed to be scheduled to fly to Washington on Friday to confront the issue himself.

There are also strains inside the anti-tobacco camp, however. Yesterday a coalition of health advocates, which includes David Kessler, the former FDA commissioner, wrote to President Bill Clinton urging him to pause before endorsing any deal that does not sufficiently tame the tobacco giants.

Any final agreement will need to be endorsed by the White House and translated into legislation in Capitol Hill. If any sane emerges of the tobacco giants having been granted concessions, the package may become politically hard for Congress to swallow.

A second issue is the breadth of immunity that may be granted to the manufacturers. Many health advocates not involved in the talks are anxious that the industry should not be granted blanket immunity in perpetuity.

Shareholders back bid for Energy

Michael Harrison

The £3.6bn agreed takeover of Energy Group, owner of Eastern Electricity and the US coal producer Peabody, by the American utility PacificCorp is expected to be announced early next week after the deal received a positive response from institutional shareholders yesterday.

A dozen or so large UK and US investors, including Norwich Union, Scottish Mutual, Morgan Grenfell, Schroders, Clerical Medical, Merrill Lynch, Duff and Phelps and Stato Farm are thought to have indicated their backing for the bid.

Shares in Energy Group rose 61.5p to 641.5p yesterday, valuing the company at £3.34bn. On Tuesday it said that the recommended bid was likely to be pitched at just under 700p.

PacificCorp, one of the largest US utilities with a market capitalisation of \$6bn (£3.9bn) is expected to pay in cash and there is speculation that it will embark on a series of asset disposals to help fund the bid.

One possible candidate for sale would be its telecommunications business, Pacific Telecom, which serves 10 states in the western US and has revenues of about \$600m.

The UK electricity regulator, Professor Stephen Littlechild, is understood to have been sounded out about the bid and there are not likely to be any regulatory hurdles. Professor Littlechild cleared the deal of seven previous bids by US utilities for British RECs without conditions and the PacificCorp Energy deal presents no obvious competition concerns.

Sources close to the deal also argued yesterday that it ought not to run into political opposition since there would be no job losses at Eastern Electricity and Margaret Beckett, the President of the Board of Trade, has made it clear that the primary consideration in merger cases will continue to be competition.

Although Energy Group's executive chairman, Derek Bonham, would be in line for a £900,000 pay-off, PacificCorp is thought to be keen to hold on to the senior management.

GEC to close down radio plant

Chris Godsmark and Barrie Clement

GEC yesterday made another step in the restructuring of its defence businesses by revealing plans to close a military radio production plant in Chelmsford, Essex with the loss of more than 335 jobs.

The business, part of GEC-Marconi, makes military and civil radio equipment but has been hit by falling orders from the Ministry of Defence and stiff competition. The company gave no explanation for its decision and said the cutbacks were not linked to the government's decision to buy a new generation of battlefield radio equipment from a consortium including IIT and Racal.

"There's no specific reason for the closure. It's part of a longer running downsizing move. Orders have been dropping and dropping and there's just not enough work to keep that kind of set up going," said a spokesman.

The job losses are the third at the site in four years and will

cut the workforce to about 500. The remaining staff will be redeployed in other GEC-Marconi businesses on the same production site and in the surrounding area.

The Chelmsford operations currently employ 3,900 people, working on a variety of radar and research and development activities. GEC-Marconi said it would abandon production of some civil radio equipment, but would move military production to other locations.

Officials of the MSF manufacturing union condemned the closure and argued that it would be a "devastating blow" to the workforce which would also decimate the local economy. Larry Brooks, National Secretary of the union, said that most of the redundancies would be compulsory. The company's spokesman also predicted compulsory job losses were likely, which would hit all grades of staff from production line workers to managers.

Mr Brooks said mood at the company was for immediate industrial action.

Oftel pushes to keep phone ban

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

British Telecom's hopes for an early end to the ban on broadcasting entertainment down its phone network have been dealt a serious blow by the industry watchdog, Oftel, fueling doubts about the strength of the group's special relationship with the new Government.

Don Cruickshank, the telecommunications regulator, is understood to have advised the Department of Trade and Industry that the entertainment ban could not be lifted unilaterally without a much broader and more lengthy review of broadcasting policy.

The Oftel submission, made a couple of weeks ago, warned that the "ban" affected all the national telephone operators and not just BT. Ending the restriction would involve radical changes to the wider policy on the way broadcasting licences are awarded, including the role of the Independent Television Commission, which could need changes to the legislation.

The advice follows comments by Chris Smith, Minister for National Heritage, shortly after the election victory which implied the ban could disappear next year if BT carried out its pledge to connect schools, colleges and hospitals to the information superhighway for free. A source close to Oftel said yesterday: "Don is making his position clear to ministers before they go ahead with the policy."

Another industry source said: "Since Oftel gave its advice to the Government there has been total silence from Whitehall on the issue."

The existing policy is that BT cannot offer broadcast television services down its network for 10 years from the start of the first cable TV franchises, which means the first review of the policy would be in 2001. In opposition Labour had backed a report by the Commons trade and industry select committee which concluded the ban should probably be lifted next year.

Oftel is thought to have told the DTI that granting BT a national broadcasting licence would complicate policy for other operators, including the ITV companies and the new digital terrestrial groups.

Reviewing the policy and changing the legislation, which was designed to encourage cable operators to make the heavy investment in local networks, would be difficult to complete by next year.

Doubts about BT's deal with Labour have grown since the election after Oftel revealed it had asked the company to offer low-price superhighway links to schools anyway and emphatically denied any link with the broadcasting ban. BT had hoped to launch its schools initiative last week but the announcement had to be abandoned after objections from senior government figures.

The move came at a sensitive time as BT waited to see whether it would be hit by the windfall tax on the privatised utilities. However ministers were concerned at giving the impression the company would escape the levy because of the schools deal.

business

Evans plans float of investment trust

Sameena Ahmad

Chris Evans, the whirling dervish of the biotechnology world, yesterday announced the flotation of his fourth company, Reabourne Merin Life Sciences Investment Trust, to be valued at around £30m.

RMLIT, which published its pathfinder prospectus yesterday, will invest in life science companies in the UK and Europe. Mr Evans, who also founded quoted groups Celsis, Chiroscience and Toad and Merin Fund which specialises in taking private biotech to flotation, said: "This is the first exclusively European life sciences trust. We at Merin are working with Finsbury and Reabourne. If anyone is able to make wise investment decisions we are."

Mr Evans said that RMLIT gave him and his team at Merin an opportunity to offer their knowledge of the quoted sector to larger institutions. "Through my strength in the unquoted companies, I have experience across the industry which is going to waste," said Mr Evans,

who will be a principal adviser in the trust. He added that the trust had to be publicly floated because it would be difficult to attract large institutional funds into an unquoted vehicle.

Other directors include John Slater, chairman of RMLIT and also at Foreign & Colonial, and Anthony Townsend, chairman of Rea Brothers and a director at Reabourne, a joint venture with Finsbury Asset Management.

At least three quarters of the placing proceeds will be invested in quoted life science companies, with a fifth committed to Mr Evans' Merin Fund. The placing price has been set at 100p a share and dealings will begin on 23 June.

Separately, directors at Galen, which also published its pathfinder prospectus yesterday, and Irish academia will be quick in when the 30-year-old drug development to services group floats on the UK stock market in July valued at £180m. The company is coming to the main market in a placing and is raising around £30m of fresh money.

Allen McClay, Galen's chairman whose 33 per cent personal stake could be worth £60m, plans to donate 6 per cent of the group's existing share capital to a charitable trust to fund research at his alma mater, the Queen's University of Belfast.

The new trust will sell around 1 per cent of the ordinary shares to provide initial funds for research at the University's Schools of Chemistry and Pharmacy. Other Galen directors also stand to gain. The 20 per cent stake of John King, chief executive, could be worth around £36m and Geoffrey Elliot, finance director will own just under 10 per cent.

Mr King said: "We are different from anything that exists in the sector today. We are profitable and have always funded our needs from internal cash flow. This will add to our own funds."

Galen's activities range from developing prescription medicines to providing drug companies with services such as clinical trial supplies. Dealings will begin in mid July.

Waddington makes £4m from society conversions

Magnus Grimond

Waddington, the consumer packaging to plastic plates group, has revealed its own £4m windfall from building society conversions and flotations this year. The group, one of the largest junk mail printers in the country, reckons this is the value of sales it has won providing the prospectuses and leaflets mailed out to millions of savers, borrowers and policy holders in mutual organisations converting to plc status.

Martin Buckley, chief executive, said the group was probably the largest integrated provider of services, from printing and stuffing envelopes to manipulating computer databases of direct mail target customers, in a business growing at more than 20 per cent a year.

Waddington did part of the printing and handled all the data processing for more than 9 million customers mailed ahead of

Halifax's stock market launch, as well as dealing with the Bristol & West sale to the Bank of Ireland and the Woolwich float. Work on the Norwich Union flotation was done partly in Belgium while Waddington handled some project management for the operation in Canada.

The group, which will have invested £18m in the business over the 24 months to the end of this financial year to March, has been so busy it has been turning business away. But Mr Buckley insisted the building society work had been no bonanza: "If we hadn't had the business with them, we would have had it with someone else."

Forecasting further growth in all its markets this year, Mr Buckley revealed a surge in Waddington's pre-tax profits from £11.9m to a record £32.1m in the year to 29 March, which represented a 25 per cent rise once exceptional losses on businesses sold were stripped out.

Earnings per share on the same basis rose 21 per cent to 21.6p and a final dividend of 6p raised the total payment for the year by 11 per cent to 10.4p.

The figures were well received by the stock market, which pushed the shares 25p higher to 297.5p. Francesca Raleigh, an analyst at Panmure Gordon, suggested Waddington had shrugged off its reputation for finding banana skins. It was now one of a handful of stocks in the paper and packaging sector where the growth story remained intact. She has raised her profits forecast for the current year by 11m to £37m.

All four divisions raised profits, although the biggest, the cartons operation, continued to be restrained by problems in the UK. The group moved in February to cut costs and introduce 24-hour-a-day working but the business has been hit by a cut in demand from big customers, which include Bird's Eye.

British Land profits from deals

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

corporate action currently ruled out, this looks more like an opportunistic move to take advantage of low interest rates. Meanwhile, NAV forecasts of 580p for the current year suggest the shares remain reasonable value.

Meyer moves into recovery phase

It has been a long time coming, but the £23m restructuring at Meyer International, the timber importer and building materials group, is finally paying off. Though turnover at £1.4bn was 7 per cent down in the year to March, operating profits advanced 12 per cent to £47.4m and pre-tax profits were 21 per cent ahead at £45.4m. Underlying earnings per share rose 18 per cent to 23.3p. The market was further cheered by positive noises on trading in the first few months of this year and the group's shares rose 16p to 431p.

Meyer is still getting no real help from the housing market, which started picking up in the second half of last year and which typically takes six

months to filter through to the business. But rising softwood prices are benefiting the group. Having crashed by around 35 per cent last year, prices bounced around 44 per cent in the year. That, and a shift away from planks to more finished items like window frames, left operating profits in the timber division up over 100 per cent to £10.3m on flatish sales of £208m.

The benefits of the revamp of the 197 Jewson builder's merchant outlets have still to come through. Sales from that division rose just 2 per cent to £443m and profits dropped £3m to £22m, largely as a result of disruption from refurbishment. Alan Peterson, who will become chief executive after John Dobby retires, said the group lost £16m in sales volume over eight weeks as the shops were re-kitted. Meyer is rightly trying to add value to nuts, bolts and nails. The group has Dulux paint centres in 47 of its shops and hires out equipment like generators and drills in 120. Supplying bathrooms and kitchens should also be a money spinner.

Meyer is also talking confidently about expanding - buying family-run merchants and building its stronger US side. Including net cash, the group

could spend £115m and still be comfortably geared at 30 per cent. House brokers BZW are forecasting profits of £56m for the current financial year, which would put the shares on 15 times forward earnings. That doesn't look too expensive, given the potential for the housing market and, more importantly, the repair and maintenance market to lend a helping hand. Buy for recovery.

Robert Wiseman milks its position

Helped by its dominant market position in Scotland and lack of exposure to the declining doorstep milk delivery market, Robert Wiseman Dairies has proved to be one of the best performers in a difficult dairy sector. Its shares have doubled since 1994, a period when rivals such as Northern Foods have been distracted by rationalisation in their doorstep milk operations as the market struggles to cope with over-capacity.

Wiseman has managed to avoid the agony as it never had any significant doorstep operation in the first place. It has concentrated more on super-market customers supplied through state of the art plants in Scotland, and more recently Manchester, as it attacks the market south of the border.

For shareholders, the question is whether the shares have run far enough. Yesterday's full-year results were the first since its hawkish acquisition of £4.8m worth of assets from the Scottish Pride business, which collapsed into receivership in February.

Pre-tax profits were 37.5 per cent ahead at £11.9m. This was after a £360,000 charge for re-organisation costs relating to the Scottish Pride deal completed in March, just a couple of weeks before the company's year end.

Volumes were ahead due to new supermarket business and the additional volumes from Scottish Pride. The company has also acquired a further 7.4 acres of land at the Manchester plant site to develop the production facilities.

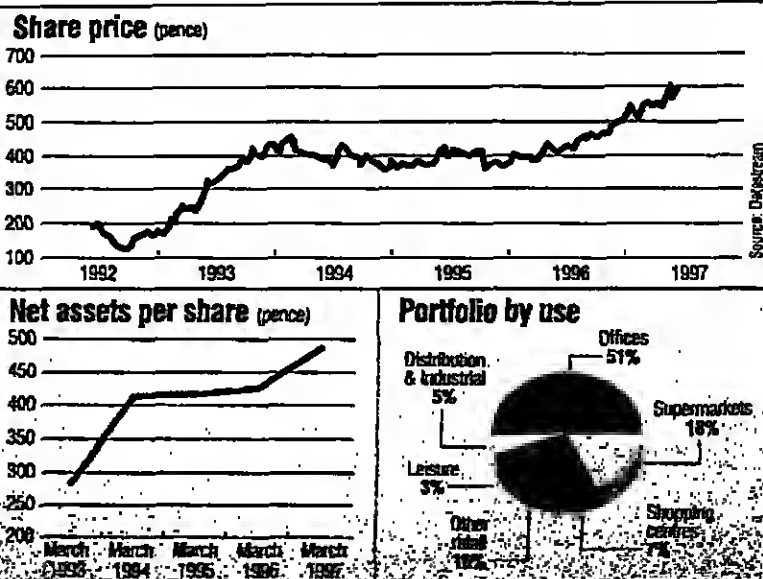
On the down side, operating margins were cut from 7 per cent to 6.6 per cent due to pressure on bulk cream and liquid milk prices. The better news is that raw milk input prices are easing.

Robert Wiseman ought to be one of the beneficiaries of the expected shake-out in the dairy sector as buying prices should fall and selling prices rise. But the shares - unchanged at 196.5p yesterday - have had such a good run that they now trade on a forward rating of more than 14, a substantial premium to rivals Unigate and Northern Foods. A bit too expensive for now.

British Land: At a glance

Market value: £2,790m, share price 588.5p

Five-Year record	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Net Rental Income (£m)	119	125	157	205	200
Pre-tax profits (£m)	27.2	53.9	49.1	62.1	91.2
Earnings per share (p)	6.4	11.4	8.4	11.2	15.7
Dividends per share (p)	7.0	7.53	8.12	8.55	9.0



GWR to lobby over licence limits

Cathy Newman

GWR Group, the radio operator, is to lobby Chris Smith, the National Heritage Secretary, for a relaxation of the rules on UK radio ownership.

Henry Meakin, GWR's chairman, said yesterday that the group would be meeting with Mr Smith "in due course" to discuss ways in which the current points system - which allows any one operator a maximum 15 per cent share of the UK audience - could be changed.

Mr Meakin said GWR's 14.9 per cent share of the audience prevented it from acquiring further licences in the UK, and it has therefore been forced to focus on acquisitions overseas.

The radio company will also confront Mr Smith about allowing commercial radio companies to compete more effectively with the BBC. Unlike commercial radio stations, BBC stations do not have to comply with the "Promote of Performance" in the Broadcasting Act, which requires them to stick to promises on content and audience profile made at the time of applying for licences.

Commercial radio stations have consistently argued that BBC stations can unfairly change their remit in response to competition.

GWR yesterday announced that it was to sell its St Albans-based radio station, 96.6FM, to Essex Radio for £725,175 in cash and Independent Radio News shares. GWR's chief executive, Ralph Bernard, said as he unveiled a 41 per cent increase in underlying earnings for the 18 months to the end of March, that Classic FM had moved into profit since GWR bought it last August. Mr Bernard said he anticipated first profits from London News Radio later this month.

He added that, following the merger of Capital Radio and Virgin Radio Holdings and Capital's subsequent withdrawal from its sales operation, Media Sales and Marketing, GWR had decided to take its own national sales in-house. MSM represented all of GWR's stations except Classic FM.

IN BRIEF

AT&T campaign targets freephone users

AT&T, the US phone giant, intensified its assault on the British market with a multi-million pound advertising campaign backing a push to poach freephone business customers from British Telecom. From Monday phone customers using freephone 0800 numbers will be able to switch to AT&T without changing their number. AT&T released research showing 60 per cent of British firms were unaware that so-called freephone number portability was to become available from next week. It said a similar change in the US had fuelled a boom in freephone numbers.

Euromoney pays £4.5m for Mondiale stake

Euromoney Publications is paying up to £4.5m for a 40 per cent interest in Mondiale Corp, a UK publishing company specialising in the business to business international office products market. The total sum is dependent on 1997 results. Euromoney said Mondiale is the market leader in its sector. It also publishes the magazine *Office Products International*. Mondiale made pre-tax profits after exceptional of £486,700 last year on sales of £1.6m.

Biocompatibles buys German group

Biocompatibles International, the medical coatings group whose shares have risen by a factor of almost 10 in the last two years, is buying a German urology group in a £5.5m all shares deal. It is acquiring Urotech Medizinische Technologies, which manufactures products such as catheters and heart stents. However, Biocompatibles shares shaded lower yesterday on its annual statement. It said that while sales of cardiovascular products were ahead, those of Proclear replacement contact lenses had slowed.

P&O confident of merger compromise

The P&O shipping group said it was "confident" it could reach a compromise with the European Commission over its plans to merge ferry services with rival Stena Line. The comments came after the Commission confirmed it had serious doubts about whether it could clear the proposal to merge ferry services on routes between Dover and Calais, Newhaven and Dieppe, and Dover and Zeebrugge. P&O said it would be able to meet the objections, which involve separating the running and marketing of the merged services from other, separate P&O and Stena operations.

Chemring shares up despite losses

Chemring, the troubled defence products to lifejackets group, saw its shares soar 22.5p to 100p yesterday, despite announcing a plunge to first-half losses of £13.1m from profits of £4.47m before. Chemring said it expected to return an operating profit in the second half and resume a "reasonable" level of earnings next year.

Company Results

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
British Property (p)	59.3m (14.1m)	29.1m (25.6m)	13.20p (11.80p)	8.45p (7.80p)
British Water (p)	97.3m (85.4m)	13.9m (12.1m)	142.3p (124.5p)	52p (4p)
British Land (p)	1.4	91.2m (82.1m)	15.7p (11.2p)	9.0p (8p)
Chemring (p)	31.2m (40.9m)	1.3m (14.7m)	-35.0p (12.0p)	2p (3.75p)
Clifford (p)	18.2m (17.2m)	1.3m (11.4m)	7.2p (5.25p)	8.1p (6.1p)
Devenish (p)	32.6m (26.5m)	1.95m (1.4m)	1.75p (1.35p)	0.75p (0.65p)
Euromoney (p)	15.1m (15.2m)	0.25m (0.45m)	19.11p	0.25p (1p)
Euromoney (p)	23.4m (19.9m)	3.81m (2.95m)	5.82p (5.01p)	2.4p (2.2p)
Euromoney (p)	105.1m (82.2m)	17.9m (14.3m)	21.2p (17.6p)	8p (7.5p)
Euromoney (p)	9.8m (8.6m)	0.4m (0.35m)	4.04p (3.55p)	0.82p (1p)
Euromoney (p)	2.03m (1.51m)	0.43m (0.48m)	20.2p (16.1p)	4.86p (4.25p)
Euromoney (p)	60.6m (59.7m)	12.9m (12.5m)	8.6p (8.3p)	2.75p (2.34p)
Euromoney (p)	1.1	84.7m (29.9m)	12.5p (7.9p)	7p (7.5p)
Euromoney (p)	115m (115m)	7.1m (4.1m)	7p (4.1p)	3.51p (3.51p)
Euromoney (p)	156m (147m)	45.6m (4.51m)	8.18p (8.41p)	0.75p (0.75p)
Euromoney (p)	1.14m (1.22m)	45.6m (4.51m)	23.5p (20.0p)	7p (6.5p)
Euromoney (p)	72.1m (78.8m)	11.9m (8.6m)	25.5p (21.5p)	12p (11.5p)
Euromoney (p)	193m (148m)	11.9m (8.6m)	10.8p (8.6p)	0.75p (0.75p)
Euromoney (p)	38.8m (39.9m)	2.01m (1.25m)	18.82p (18.01p)	8.1p (6.5p)
Euromoney (p)	19.5m (19.4m)	5.05m (6.35m)	4.7p (5.9p)	1.5p (1.5p)
Euromoney (p)	310m (329m)	32.1m (11.9m)	21.57p (7.45p)	10.4p (8.4p)
Euromoney (p)	25.5m (23.0m)	1.4m (0.50m)	1.8p (0.48p)	1.3p (1.35p)
Euromoney (p)	31.8m (25.2m)	4.6m (2.71m)	3.89p (3.11p)	1.20p (1p)

Victrex may move to US

Sameena Ahmad

Peter Rowley, chairman of Victrex, the high-tech plastics group, said yesterday that he had considered closing the group's UK operations and taking the company to the US.

Victrex, which sells only 3 per cent of its products in the UK but has its manufacturing and research plants here, has been badly affected by the strength of the pound. The group issued a profits warning in January after failing to hedge against the pound. Profits for the six months to March fell 19 per cent to £5.1m.

Mr Rowley said that with half its business in the US, Victrex had considered a Nasdaq listing. "Closing our UK operations takes the currency factor out of the equation."

However he stressed that this was a long-term consideration. Explaining why there were so few UK sales, Mr Rowley launched a bitter attack on the British technology industry. "Can you name a major British-owned car company. Where do we feature in aerospace? Britain is not in the first league of world technology."

CHANCERY DIVISION COMPANIES COURT IN THE MATTER OF INCEPTA PLC

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 1985

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Order of the High Court of Justice (Chancery Division) dated 21st May 1997 confirming the reduction of the Share Premium Account of the above company from £29,564,011 to £28,162,024 approved by the Court was registered with the Registrar of Companies on 29th May 1997.

Dated 12th June 1997
Wodlake Bell,
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Taking Stock

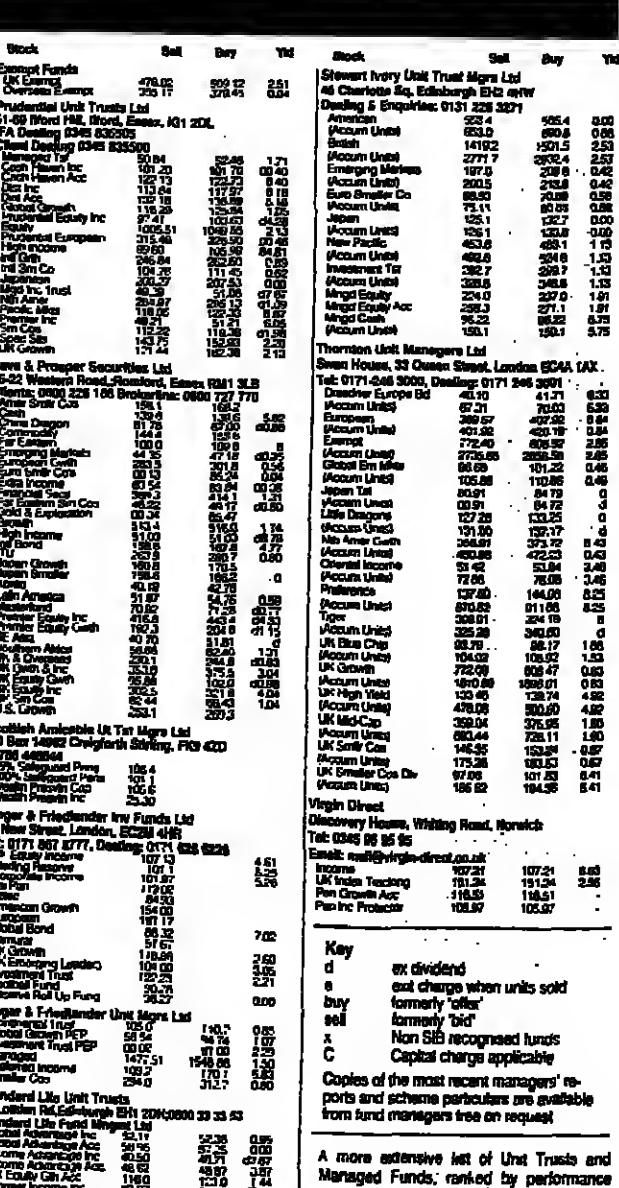
- ❑ **Talk of a regional brewery bid is going the rounds.** One suggestion is Greene King, the East Anglian group, could move on Gibbs Mew, the Salisbury brewer. Greene made an unsuccessful bid for Morland but has since splashed out £197.5m for The Magic Pub Co. Gibbs has found the going tough and profits for the year ended March are expected to be around £3m (£2.2m).
- ❑ **Drew Scientific** eased 2.5p to 147.5p. It has brought forward the development of its new blood tests which could detect heat problems and hopes to launch this year. Yamaichi has estimated Drew could make profits of £2.25m by 1999.
- ❑ **Allied Domecq**, near its low of 418p, is expected to rise £12m today by selling 100-plus pubs to a new venture.

[illegible]

223	224	225	226	227	228	229	230	231	232	233	234	235	236	237	238	239	240	241	242	243	244	245	246	247	248	249	250	251	252	253	254	255	256	257	258	259	260	261	262	263	264	265	266	267	268	269	270	271	272	273	274	275	276	277	278	279	280	281	282	283	284	285	286	287	288	289	290	291	292	293	294	295	296	297	298	299	300	301	302	303	304	305	306	307	308	309	310	311	312	313	314	315	316	317	318	319	320	321	322	323	324	325	326	327	328	329	330	331	332	333	334	335	336	337	338	339	340	341	342	343	344	345	346	347	348	349	350	351	352	353	354	355	356	357	358	359	360	361	362	363	364	365	366	367	368	369	370	371	372	373	374	375	376	377	378	379	380	381	382	383	384	385	386	387	388	389	390	391	392	393	394	395	396	397	398	399	400	401	402	403	404	405	406	407	408	409	410	411	412	413	414	415	416	417	418	419	420	421	422	423	424	425	426	427	428	429	430	431	432	433	434	435	436	437	438	439	440	441	442	443	444	445	446	447	448	449	450	451	452	453	454	455	456	457	458	459	460	461	462	463	464	465	466	467	468	469	470	471	472	473	474	475	476	477	478	479	480	481	482	483	484	485	486	487	488	489	490	491	492	493	494	495	496	497	498	499	500	501	502	503	504	505	506	507	508	509	510	511	512	513	514	515	516	517	518	519	520	521	522	523	524	525	526	527	528	529	530	531	532	533	534	535	536	537	538	539	540	541	542	543	544	545	546	547	548	549	550	551	552	553	554	555	556	557	558	559	560	561	562	563	564	565	566	567	568	569	570	571	572	573	574	575	576	577	578	579	580	581	582	583	584	585	586	587	588	589	590	591	592	593	594	595	596	597	598	599	600	601	602	603	604	605	606	607	608	609	610	611	612	613	614	615	616	617	618	619	620	621	622	623	624	625	626	627	628	629	630	631	632	633	634	635	636	637	638	639	640	641	642	643	644	645	646	647	648	649	650	651	652	653	654	655	656	657	658	659	660	661	662	663	664	665	666	667	668	669	670	671	672	673	674	675	676	677	678	679	680	681	682	683	684	685	686	687	688	689	690	691	692	693	694	695	696	697	698	699	700	701	702	703	704	705	706	707	708	709	710	711	712	713	714	715	716	717	718	719	720	721	722	723	724	725	726	727	728	729	730	731	732	733
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PEOPLE & BUSINESS

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'Mere mortals' try to stop the charge of Tiger

Andy Farrell, in Bethesda, Maryland, looks at golf's major attraction at the US Open which starts today

All you need to know about the US Open was contained in an incident involving Brad Faxon. When a spectator asked Faxon to pose for a photograph, he replied: "It's the US Open; I can't smile." And that was only Monday.

The US Open, never big on laughs, is renowned for producing winners who are not necessarily the best in the world but have the most dramatic careers. As at Augusta, Woods is in line to break more of Jack Nicklaus' records. Victory here would make him the first player since the Golden Bear, who plays his 150th major championship alongside his son Gary, a qualifier, to win the first two majors of the year.

Woods is adamant he will not think about the Grand Slam unless he is leading going into the final round of the US PGA with the first three legs in the bag.

But as he has found in the last two months, that does not stop people making up their own minds about whether he should or should not be doing.

"The thing that has changed dramatically in my life is the nipping at my heels," Woods said. He admits he cannot get everything right, and misses not getting a hit of peace and quiet during a practice round. The Masters champion attempted to find some yesterday when he went out at 6.15am, only to be asked to leave the course after a few holes because it was not yet open.

Tigermania has reached the proportions where the 21-year-old receives between 2,000 and 4,000 letters a week, and like only Michael Jordan, Woods has his own Nike label of clothing. However, the media and political backlash has also kicked in, starting with Woods describing himself as "Cabinasian" rather than belonging to one of the established ethnic groups. The latest controversy involved his

coach Butch Harmon, who works at a course in Houston, Lochinvar, which excludes women. "I can't be a champion on all fours," Woods said.

After his worst finish as a professional at the Memorial, Woods spent three days with Harmon at Lochinvar last week, finishing up with a 63 which could easily have been less. At 7,213 yards, the longest in US Open history, and with a par of 70, Congressional is not even for Woods. Hitting fairways and greens will be paramount and with the number of doglegs, Woods will only hit three drivers off the tee: at the

sixth, 10th and 15th. Two of those holes are converted par-fives, while the 607-yard ninth is a three-shotter even for

Woods. Without the extreme advantage he had at Augusta, his greatest asset, his length, is taken more out of the equation and gives us mere mortals more of an opportunity to compete. The playing field is more level.

"But we are all anxious to find out how he copes with this form of golf. If he copes with this and was here, as well as at Augusta, then we are all in trouble."

Especially as the physical aspect of Woods game may not even be his strongest suit. "I feel my mind is the strongest part about me," he said. "The biggest asset I have is to be able to think my way around the golf course."

Exhibit one is the way Woods

corrected a swing fault midway through his first round at Augusta, while his father, Earl, has taught him all tricks he learnt in the psychological warfare he endured as a Green Beret.

"He has passed on to me how to deal with adversity and I've had a lot of things to deal with since I've turned pro. I've noticed that once I start playing in a tournament, I'm fine. All the things my dad has taught me are definitely working." With Sunday's final round on Father's Day, Woods Sr, and the punter with a \$10,000 bet on Tiger, could be the only ones smiling.

TODAY'S SELECTED FIRST-ROUND TEE-OFF TIMES (EST. US unless stated): 7.30am P. Faxon, 8.00am J. Faxon, 8.30am J. Faxon, 9.00am J. Faxon, 9.30am J. Faxon, 10.00am J. Faxon, 10.30am J. Faxon, 11.00am J. Faxon, 11.30am J. Faxon, 12.00pm J. Faxon, 12.30pm J. Faxon, 1.00pm J. Faxon, 1.30pm J. Faxon, 2.00pm J. Faxon, 2.30pm J. Faxon, 3.00pm J. Faxon, 3.30pm J. Faxon, 4.00pm J. Faxon, 4.30pm J. Faxon, 5.00pm J. Faxon, 5.30pm J. Faxon, 6.00pm J. Faxon, 6.30pm J. Faxon, 7.00pm J. Faxon, 7.30pm J. Faxon, 8.00pm J. Faxon, 8.30pm J. Faxon, 9.00pm J. Faxon, 9.30pm J. Faxon, 10.00pm J. Faxon, 10.30pm J. Faxon, 11.00pm J. Faxon, 11.30pm J. Faxon, 12.00pm J. Faxon, 12.30pm J. Faxon, 1.00pm J. Faxon, 1.30pm J. Faxon, 2.00pm J. Faxon, 2.30pm J. Faxon, 3.00pm J. Faxon, 3.30pm J. Faxon, 4.00pm J. Faxon, 4.30pm J. Faxon, 5.00pm J. Faxon, 5.30pm J. Faxon, 6.00pm J. Faxon, 6.30pm J. Faxon, 7.00pm J. Faxon, 7.30pm J. Faxon, 8.00pm J. Faxon, 8.30pm J. Faxon, 9.00pm J. Faxon, 9.30pm J. Faxon, 10.00pm J. 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sport

INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL: Brazilian defeat cannot mask the potential as coach counts up the plusses. Glenn Moore reports

Hoddle and England grow and prosper

Glenn Hoddle's first year as England coach ended, just as Terry Venables' debut season had, with defeat by Brazil. It was no disgrace, Brazil are the best around and, in the Parc des Princes on Tuesday night, there were times when England looked worthy opponents just as they had in the opening half at Wembley two summers ago.

Venables' team progressed considerably over the following year and went on to be within a penalty kick of the European Championship final. Hoddle, in building on Venables' progress, has created a side of greater potential but he faces a harder task. As well as the traditional European powers France '98 will have Brazil, probably Argentina, and the emerging force of Nigeria. England will also be away.

First, as Hoddle has always been anxious to stress, England have to qualify. "We are talking as if we are already there," he cautioned as England's efforts were dissected.

In his 11 games (nine wins, defeats by Italy and Brazil) Hoddle has called up 45 players, capping 29 of them, five (David Beckham, Andy Hinchcliffe, David James, Nicky Butt and Paul Scholes) for the first time. Paul Ince and Gareth Southgate have appeared in 10 matches, no one has been ever-present. Darren Anderton, Steve Stone and Steve Howey have been unavailable almost all season and 11 of those he has picked were injured for the Tournoi de France.

In their absence others have seized their chance, notably Scholes, Phil Neville, Rob Lee and, to an extent, Ian Wright. The Liverpool pair of Steve McManaman and Robbie Fowler will be wondering if they will pay for their absence.

Scholes and Phil Neville have been, with Sol Campbell, the major plusses of the Tournoi.



The England bench reflect on their only defeat in the Tournoi during the dying moments of Tuesday's 1-0 reverse against Brazil in Paris

Photograph: Michael Steele/Empics

"Scholes showed a lot of maturity while Phil Neville created and defended well playing in an unfamiliar wing-back position," Hoddle said. He added: "They have a great temperament and have adapted well to international football. Sol has grown as a player and he will get even better."

Gary Neville also did well, only looking uncomfortable when faced with Christophe Dugarry's height, while David Beckham continued his progress and will have learned much in terms of play and behaviour.

Then there was Ince, probably the outstanding player of

England's recent five-match period. "You do not realise what a player he is until you do not have him," Hoddle said. "There is not a player like him anywhere. He can drive forward and he can defend. Everyone has gone up a level but he has progressed even more."

Alan Shearer and David Sea-

man underlined their quality while Paul Gascoigne showed signs of his "I was pleased with him," Hoddle added. "There were signs he is getting back to his best. He is not yet 100 per cent fit and he needs three to four injury-free months. He is maturing and can give you stature at the right time."

Hoddle recognised that England have to improve on the ball defensively and will be concerned about the lack of cover for Ince - David Batty is very much a poor substitute - and the continued absence of a natural sweeper.

Assuming England overcome Moldova at Wembley in Sep-

tember, qualification would be guaranteed by an October victory in Rome. A draw ought to be good enough as the best-performing second-placed team of the nine groups. England may even manage that in defeat but it would require some bad results by the likes of Yugoslavia, Belgium and whoever

ENGLAND'S RECORD UNDER HODDLE

Date	Opposition	Result
01.09.96	Malta	W 1-0
01.09.96	Malta	W 1-0
09.10.96	Poland	W 1-0
09.10.96	Poland	W 1-0
09.11.96	Georgia	W 1-0
12.02.97	Italy	W 1-0
29.03.97	Mexico	W 1-0
29.03.97	Mexico	W 1-0
30.04.97	Georgia	W 1-0
24.05.97	South Africa	W 1-0
24.05.97	South Africa	W 1-0
31.05.97	Poland	W 1-0
04.06.97	Italy	W 1-0
07.06.97	France	W 1-0
10.06.97	Brazil	L 0-1
10.06.97	Brazil	L 0-1
Home	W	10
Away	W	9
Total	W	19
England's all-time record	W	736
	D	420
	L	174
	F	170

is second in Scotland's group. "The bottom line is qualifying - and then trying to win it. I know that," Hoddle said.

"The job looked worse on the outside, when I was at Chelsea. It looked a hell of a difficult job. It is, but I enjoy it and am taking a lot of pride in it. The ups are very high and the downs very low. I have a good family behind me and that is the most important thing. Winning in Poland was a great high, it may not be the best thing I've done - taking Swindon into the Premiership was a fantastic achievement at the time - but this is the nation. It means so much to so many people."

The brilliant Brazilians still dancing to a different beat

When Glenn Hoddle spoke this week about narrowing the gap between English and Brazilian football some of us recalled a remark passed by Alf Ramsey on his return from the 1970 World Cup finals in Mexico.

Ramsey's rather clumsy assertion that he had learned little from Brazil's exhilarating triumph was ridiculed in some quarters but in fact he had hit the button. What he had in mind was a different philosophy and the unique rhythm of Brazilian football.

Considering that England's defeat by Brazil in Guadalajara was by the narrowest of margins and that Ramsey could call on such notables as Gordon Banks, Bobby Moore, Bobby Charlton, Geoff Hurst and Martin Peters,

little separated them from the greatest of world champions. However, Ramsey was right to conclude that the exuberance of Brazil's football is beyond emulation.

A marked advancement in collective understanding over recent weeks has raised the possibility that England will be a force if they qualify for the World Cup finals next summer, but matching Brazil's technical brilliance is a different matter.

The late Joao Saldanha, a left wing political activist in his youth, who was replaced by Mario Zagallo as Brazil's manager shortly before the 1970 finals for refusing to co-operate with secret service men assigned to the squad, said: "Our football is like our music. Sudden changes of pace and nuance



England may yet become a force in next year's World Cup but Ken Jones says Glenn Hoddle's team still have a long way to go to match the technical ability of the world champions

that you don't get anywhere else in the world. Other countries have produced great players, great teams, but we play to a different beat."

It springs from history, the arrival of black slaves from West Africa in the 19th century, the subsequent merging of ethnic groups. Jose Werneck, who was widely respected in Brazil as a football pundit before moving to the United States, said: "I don't want to sound racist but the Afro-Brazilian footballers like the Afro-American athletes have a distinct advantage

in power. Pele was the best example. He had tremendous power in his thighs that enabled him to explode like a sprinter coming out of the blocks. And, as with poor people in other countries, football provides a means of escaping disenfranchisement. Some of our finest players have been white, Gerson, Tostao, Dunga and now Juninho. But in the main they are black or of mixed origins, the mulattoes."

As Werneck points out, Brazilian football differs from that played in other South American

countries. "People often make the mistake of putting us together as a group as though there is a common style. It isn't so. For example, Argentina still favour a short passing style that was influenced by immigrants from Europe. Brazil play short and long. Didi and Gerson were marvellous passers through the air and you can see from the present team that Zagallo does not restrict the players in their options. And, as always, speed is a vital element."

Speaking after England's 1-0 loss to Brazil in Paris, the As-

ton Villa defender Gareth Southgate said that he had never come up against such quickness. Sol Campbell, who had an outstanding tournament, said: "One moment they are there, the next they have gone. You have to concentrate all the time."

Under pressure at home to expand on Brazil's victory in the 1994 finals, perhaps mellowing in his later years, Zagallo seems to be promoting a return to the verve that has made Brazil's best football so compelling, what Pele called the beautiful game.

For a variety of reasons, political intrigue, economic crises and a misguided attempt to take European ideas on board (one of their coaches, Claudio Coutinho, an army officer and handball international started admiration

for principles set out in a coaching manual written by a British football writer, Eric Batt, who had never played the game) that heritage was squandered following the 1970 triumph.

The appointment of Juninho's mentor, Tele Santana, almost brought about a return to old glories. But for the absence through injury of a marvellous centre-forward, Reinaldo, the team of Socrates, Zico, Falcão and Juninho would have romped home in the 1982 finals.

The speed with which Brazil closed England down in Paris spoke of Zagallo's concern over recent defensive lapses, his fear that virtuosity could be undermined by defensive shortcomings. If all comes together next summer, look out. It's fine for Hoddle to speak of getting



Denilson: One of Brazil's outstanding new talents

closer to Brazil but a persistent thought is that they are still some way short of realising their full potential.

Small Fry

Bosnich turns goalscorer for Australians

The Aston Villa goalkeeper Mark Bosnich relieved his boredom by scoring a late penalty as Australia opened their World Cup qualifying campaign with a 13-0 rout of the Solomon Islands yesterday.

Bosnich, who barely touched the ball during the match, stepped up to complete the scoring with the last kick of an embarrassingly one-sided Oceania group game. Strikers Damian Mori and John Aloisi had then scored five goals each.

The victory gave Terry Venables his sixth win in as many matches since taking over as Australian national coach last year. "We were particularly efficient and our attitude was very good," the former England coach said. "Even when we were several goals up, we didn't try to be too clever or take the mickey."

Midfielders Ernie Tapai and Craig Foster also found the scoresheet for Australia, who are hosting all the matches in their qualifying group, which also includes Tahiti. It was Australia's highest score in an Oceania World Cup match, eclipsing their 10-0 drubbing of Fiji in 1981.

Australia and New Zealand are expected to qualify from their respective qualifying groups and would then face each other in an Oceania play-off over two legs in June and July. The winner will play an Asian opponent in a final two-leg qualifier later this year for a place in the 1998 World Cup in France.

Venables was cleared yesterday of any potential conflict of interest over the proposed transfers of three Soccerero in-

ternationals to his club. Portsmouth Venables' future as manager appeared to have been thrown into doubt because of his apparent involvement in projected deals for former Leicester keeper Zeljko Kalac, midfielder Robert Ennes and utility player Hamilton Thorp.

However, the Soccer Australia chairman, David Hill, has revealed that under the conditions of his contract, Venables is permitted to pursue other interests, but could not become directly involved in the transfers.

Hill said: "Terry Venables has done nothing that contravenes our rules or the contract we entered into with him."

Venables had sent videotapes of Sydney United's Kalac and Ennes and West Adelaide's Thorp to the Portsmouth manager, Terry Fenwick, to study.

Portsmouth are believed to be tying up a move for the trio, for a fee in the region of £1m, with defender Matthew Bingley also having been targeted. However, several clubs in Australia expressed their outrage that Venables was linked to the transfers, with draft letters of complaint filed to the Soccer Australia board alleging conflict of interest.

The clubs were citing the Stewart report, a 1994 document about alleged corruption in transfer dealings, particularly with regard to the impropriety of national coaches being involved in any deals.

But Hill added: "When we negotiated his contract he was asked if his interest in Australia was a problem and we said 'no'. He is allowed to pursue outside interests."

Rangers keep Laudrup

ADAM SZRETER

Brian Laudrup, the Danish international striker, has decided to stay at Rangers at least until the end of next season after two days of talks with his chairman, David Murray, at his summer home in Jersey.

The 28-year-old striker's brother, Michael, was expected to join Ajax from the J-League club Kobe, and it was thought that if Michael was heading for Amsterdam then Brian would team up with him as they were keen to play together at club level.

The fact that the Scottish champions have already spent around £10m on new players was believed to have influenced his decision to stay.

Ajax's new manager, the former Danish international Morten Olsen, who was confident of bringing the brothers together, will be disappointed, as will the Manchester United man-

ager, Alex Ferguson, especially as his attempt to sign the Bayern Munich defender Markus Babbel is in doubt. Babbel turned down United's first offer, but Babbel's Swiss lawyers told United yesterday that the player will continue negotiations.

Chelsea have signed the Dutch international goalkeeper Ed De Goeij from Feyenoord for £2.25m on a five-year contract. Ruud Gulit, the Chelsea manager, checked out his 30-year-old former Feyenoord team-mate in South Africa last week when the Netherlands won a friendly international 2-0.

"This is a dream move," said De Goeij, who has won 29 international caps. "Several Dutch and Spanish clubs have shown an interest in me but when I knew Ruud wanted me there was only one club for me - Chelsea."

The prospect of playing in England with a big club like Chelsea really excites me.

Everton tempt Sacchi

ALAN NIXON

Everton are switching their search for a manager to Milan's Arrigo Sacchi. The Goodison chairman, Peter Johnson, has made a discreet approach to the experienced coach, who took Italy to the World Cup final three years ago.

Sacchi, who still has a year left on his contract, has had a nightmare return to Milan this season and is expected to make way for Fabio Capello, who is leaving Real Madrid soon. The chance to move to Everton with millions to spend may appeal as his reputation is at an all-time low in Italy, where he walked out as the national manager to go back to Milan.

Johnson is coming under fire for his failure to replace Joe Royle. Bobby Robson has stalled about joining, George Graham will not quit Leeds, both Bryan Robson and Martin O'Neill shied away and a move for

John Toshack was unpopular. Blackburn's new manager, Roy Hodgson, is making France's Patrick Valery his first signing for Blackburn Rovers. The Bastia right-back flew to Ewood Park yesterday for contract talks and a medical. Valery has had an outstanding season for the Corsican side, and Hodgson spotted him during his time in charge at Internazionale.

Graham is poised to make three major foreign signings for Leeds. The Dutch striker Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink arrives today to complete a £2m move from Boavista, days after his successful farewell appearance in the Portuguese Cup final.

Norway's midfielder Alf Inge Haland will also join Leeds today, leaving the Yorkshire club to sort out a fee with Nottingham Forest. And his fellow Norwegian Tore Pedersen is expected to arrive after the weekend. The centre-back is poised for a £1m move from the relegated German side St Pauli.

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Busy Rusedski must raise game

Tennis

JOHN ROBERTS
reports from Queen's Club

You never know what to expect on grass. Goran Ivanisevic mused. A trio of Brits in the third round of the Stella Artois Championships, for example, one of whom, the 19-year-old Martin Lee, is due to face the whimsical Croat today.

Michael Chang knows what to expect on the sport's fastest surface, and in his case it does not amount to a lot. The world No 2, paying his first visit to the laws of Queen's Club, was eliminated in his opening match by Scott Draper, the talented Australian left-hander.

Draper now plays Greg Rusedski, who will need to raise his game after surviving a nervous afternoon against Kevin Ullyett, a South African qualifier, ranked No 174. Then there is Tim Henman, the British No

1, who must overcome the challenge of Jens Knippschild, of Germany, ranked No 105. Knippschild has advanced at the expense of one of last year's Wimbledon semi-finalists, Jason Stoltenberg, and the Frenchman Olivier Delaitre, who curtailed Henman's trip to the French Open in round one.

Rusedski, it must be admitted, did reach the third round here in 1994, but in those days he was still pounding his serves as a Canadian. Yesterday, he appeared to have squandered his opportunity after failing to convert any of three match points at 5-4 in the third set.

Ullyett, having forced a tie-break, created two match points of his own. Rusedski served away the first, at 5-6, only to double-fault to present his opponent with another opportunity at 6-7. This time Rusedski salvaged the match with an emphatic backhand cross-court service return and clinched the

shoot-out, 9-7, on his fourth match point, 7-5, 4-6, 7-6.

To be fair, Rusedski had a busy day, having first completed his first-round match against Australia's Mark Woodforde, which had been suspended overnight because of rain at one set all and 1-1. Rusedski completed the task, 6-4, 6-3, 6-3.

Draper required five match points in defeating Chang, who fought back after losing the opening set and actually had a break point in the third set tie-break. Draper saved it and was relieved to see Chang loop a forehand long at 6-7 to lose the match, 6-3, 2-6, 7-6.

The question now is whether the three Brits can emulate Chris Bailey (1989) and Jeremy Bates (1994), the only two home representatives to have advanced to the quarter-finals.

Lee, who wears yellow and blue outfits similar to the ones in which Brazil's Gustavo Kuerten triumphed at the French Open, must hope to catch Ivanisevic on one of his more eccentric days.

After defeating Leander Paes, of India, yesterday, 7-6, 6-3, Ivanisevic revealed that he did not finally decide to play until an hour before the match because of a wrist injury. "I hope it doesn't get any worse," he said.

His thoughts on playing Lee? "I know who he is, but I over saw him play," Ivanisevic said. "I don't talk about playing British players. I lost to [Chris] Wilkinson here and to [Nick] Brown at Wimbledon." Not to mention saving a match point against Chris Bailey with an ace on a second serve.

Pete Sampras seemed pleased to set his feet on grass after failing again to dominate on the clay of Paris. The world No 1 defeated Javier Frana, of Argentina, 6-3, 6-2 in less than an hour, in his opening match.

"It's like I over left after last year," Sampras said. "I got used to the court and the balls on Monday, when I played doubles [with Henman]. I'm happy with the way I played today, and I have no complaints."

Raymond raises game to eliminate Smith

British hopes came to an end at the DFS Classic women's tournament at Edgbaston yesterday with both Samantha Smith and Lucie Ahl losing their second round matches.

Smith, the British No 1 from Essex, was first to go, losing 7-6, 6-4 to third-seeded Lisa Raymond of the United States. Ahl put up a strong fight but the experience of Dominique van Roost, the sixth seed, proved too much and the Belgian won 7-5, 6-2.

Smith went very close to pulling off a surprise when she had four set points in the first set and led 4-2 in the second, but Raymond, who reached the fourth round of the French Open, applied pressure at crucial times to clinch victory.

"Obviously I'm disappointed with the result but she played some unbelievable points and I

couldn't have done anything more," Smith said. "When she had chances she was able to put big serves in. I wasn't able to raise my game when I needed it."

For Ahl it was the first experience of taking on a top-100 player. Van Roost was the world No 28 at the start of the week. The Devco player was pleased to find that her level - around the 200 mark - was not too far away from the higher standard.

"I didn't really know what to expect," she said. "I was pleased to go out there and compete with her."

It was also Ahl's first time competing in the main draw of a WTA Tour event. On Tuesday she won her first-round match 6-4, 6-4 against Claire Taylor of Oxford. "It's great to get through the first round and great to play players like Van Roost," she said.

Australian morale faces a further test

Cricket

GUY HODGSON
reports from Trent Bridge

As Paul Reiffel joined the Australian team yesterday, they were hatching themselves for bad omen to offset his arrival. Andrew Bichel, who has bowled only five overs in England, is likely to be ruled out of the tour.

Bichel, a 26-year-old right-arm fast bowler from Queensland who injured his back in the nets before the first Test, had hoped to play in the current three-day game against Nottinghamshire here. He has not responded to treatment, however, and, although further tests will be made today, the likelihood is that he will be sent home.

This, allied to Jason Gillespie's hamstring injury, is improving Reiffel's chances of making a team hoping to recover from the nine-wicket defeat by England at Edgbaston in the first Test. He has not played a first-class game since February but with Australia out exactly for choice thanks to injury, the final place bowling place will be between him and Brendon Julian.

Which has shades of 1993, when Reiffel got into the Australian team after Craig McDermott broke down and proceeded to take 19 England wickets in three Tests. The irony, it was noted at the time, was that his moment of the pitch made him the most "English" bowler the tourists possessed.

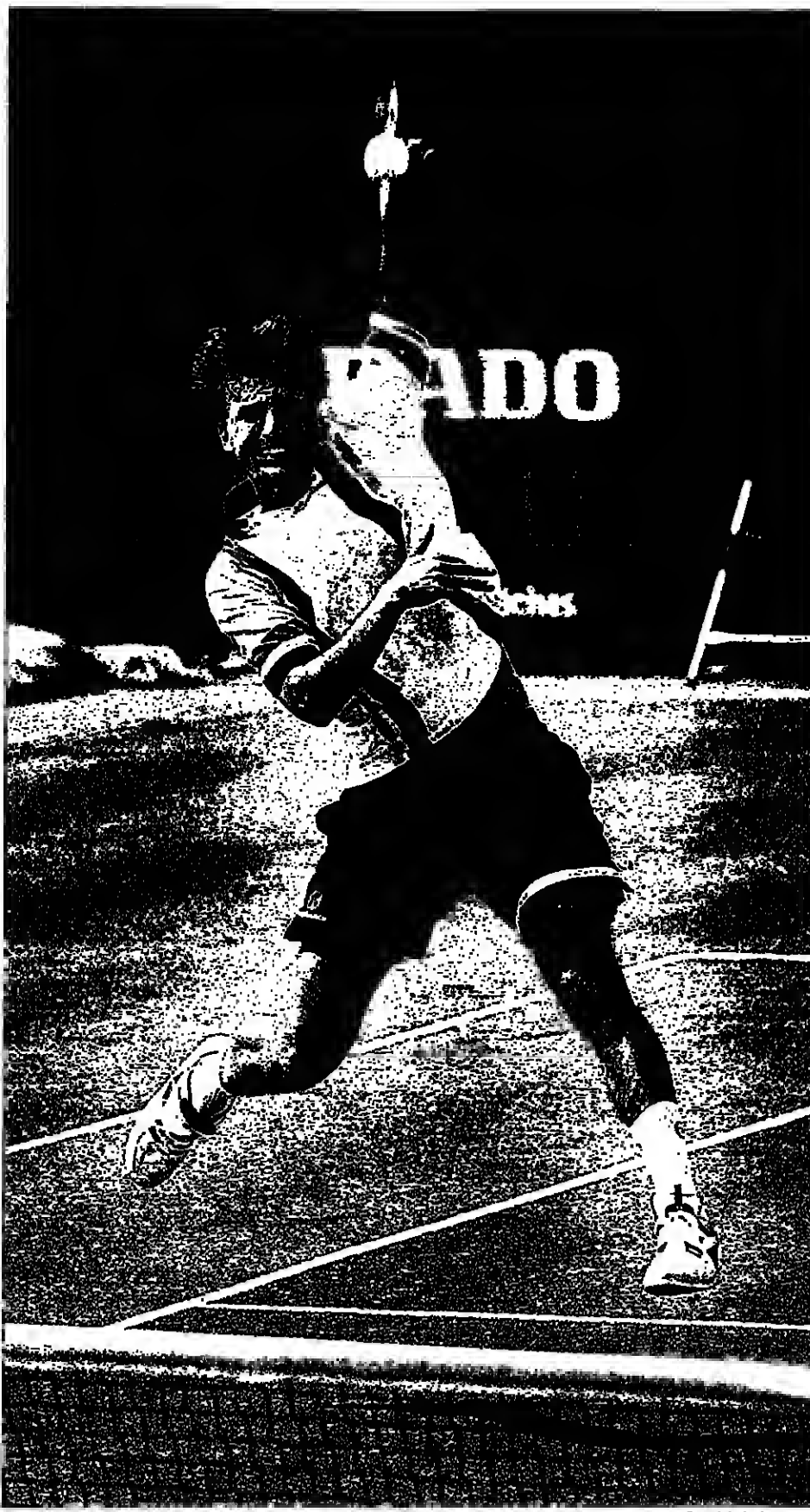
Indeed Australia's captain, Mark Taylor, had estimated that Reiffel would be an important bowler on this tour, so it was a surprise when he was omitted from the original party. "One of the selectors, Jim Higgs, rang me up and broke the news," Reiffel said. "He offered me some encouragement but at the time I wasn't really taking in what he was saying. I was pretty upset so it wouldn't have mattered what he said. I had a few weeks off, thought about things and decided the only way back was to work hard to have a good summer. It turns out I got back a bit quicker."

Reiffel's chance to impress here was dashed yesterday when play was washed out. Which, given the need for the Australians

for practice, summed up their fate so far on the tour. After Edgbaston you would expect spirits to be down, although Reiffel's experience would appear to deny that.

"The morale is very good," he said. "They're very professional and one loss is not going to leave them in the dumps. They'll come back fighting."

John Emburey announced his retirement from first-class cricket at the age of 44. Northamptonshire's former all-rounder took 1,608 wickets scored 12,021 runs and made 64 Test appearances in his career spanning 17 years, as well as numerous honours with Middlesex. He is to concentrate on coaching duties. He will continue to play in one-day games.



Goran Ivanisevic hits a smash at Queen's Club yesterday. Photograph: David Asdown

Stark aims for repeat on Positive Rain

EQUESTRIANISM
GENEVIÈVE MURPHY

Ian Stark is bidding to repeat last year's victory in the Bramham International Three-Day Event when he rides Positive Rain in this three-star contest which begins today.

The big grey gelding is owned by Joaquin Hemming, who offered Stark the ride after injuring himself in a fall at Puchestown in Ireland last month. She had previously ridden Positive Rain to victory in the national section of last year's Windsor Horse Trials.

Scottish Borders on 24 May and the following day he rode the grey to win at the nearby Floors Castle Horse Trials, near Kelso. What is more, the victory was achieved with just 19 penalties in the dressage and outdoing to add in either the cross-country or show jumping.

Stark's opponents will include Karen Dixon (his team-mate at three Olympic Games) on Too Smart and Pippa Funnell (who is bidding for her first place as a senior British team) on Supreme Rock. Funnell is already long-listed with both Bits and Pieces and Designer Tramp for September's European Open Championships.

Sprinter ready to retire after financial snub

Athletics

Phyllis Smith, the Wolverhampton-based 400 metres runner, has hinted she is ready to retire from the sport in a dispute over the size of a cash grant.

Smith is pulling out of Britain's European Cup team after being allocated just £2,000 from the sport's lottery funds. She said: "It is a terrible slap in the face. Malcolm Arnold, the director of coaching, told me that if I wanted more I would have to get in the top 10 in the world. It seems that it wasn't enough to set a British indoor record this winter."

Smith, 31, competed in the Barcelona and Atlanta Olympics and reached the final of the 400m in Spain five years ago. She has been named in the 4 x 400m relay team for next week's European Cup in Munich but has seriously considered retirement. She added: "At the moment I am determined to retire."

American athletics officials have suspended Mary Slaney, making her ineligible for the national championships which began in Indianapolis yesterday, an athletics source said. The source said a USA Track and Field board had suspended the runner on Tuesday night. A

USATF spokesman, Pete Cava, declined to comment.

Slaney's husband, Richard, said the couple had not been "personally notified." "If that's what they have done, she will not come to Indianapolis. Why should she? To do what?" Richard Slaney said from the couple's home in Eugene, Oregon. He would not comment on whether Slaney would seek arbitration or a court order in the case.

The decision to suspend Slaney was based on a review by the US board of her drug test at last summer's US Olympic trials, the source said. Slaney's test showed a higher than acceptable ratio of testosterone to epiteosterone. Any ratio higher than 6-1 is considered suspicious by the International Amateur Athletic Federation and the athlete can be suspended.

Slaney has consistently denied taking any substance banned by the IAAF, but the IAAF's general secretary, Istvan Gyulai, said on Tuesday: "There is a very clear indication that this [Slaney] is a doping case."

The IAAF suspended Slaney and her fellow Americans Sandra Farmer-Patrick and Stephano Flency almost two weeks ago pending the outcome of their US hearings.

Insults and Vegas help Rodman relax

Basketball

When the Utah Jazz made it to the NBA finals, Dennis Rodman must have groaned. The wild man of the Chicago Bulls knew he faced long nights in Salt Lake City if the seven-game series went any distance and the home of the Mormons is not the place to find an all-night body-piercing salon.

Sure enough a spotless, religious-driven town proved too much for a cross-dressing exhibitionist like Rodman, who decided to go over the state line to Nevada for a little relaxation in Las Vegas, but only after likening Utah's population to splinter muscles and telling the media to be sure to quote him.

With one of the most important sporting events in America tied at 2-2, the build-up to yesterday's third game in Salt Lake City was dominated by Rodman. He responded to criticism from the Anti-Defamation League by more or less repeating his insulting remarks and adding that he would not have made similar comments about Jews.

So far the Bulls, who suspended him earlier this season for swearing on television, have kept quiet, as has the Mormon Church. The NBA, aware that there is no precedent for a

player defaming an entire religious movement, has reacted tentatively so far.

"If that's what he said, it's indefensible. We will be dealing with Dennis after the finals are concluded," said a spokesman for the association, which banned him for 11 games earlier in the season after he kicked a cameraman in the groin.

Rodman has yet to score since the series moved to the home of the Jazz almost a week ago, a poor return for a player paid \$9m (£5.6m) a year to put points on the board.

The Bulls coach, Phil Jackson, said he had not "endorsed" Rodman's trips to Sin City, but did not condemn him. "I didn't endorse where he went," he said. "Dennis is the kind of person that needs to blow off some steam and I imagine he got it done."

For Jerry Krause, the Bulls' general manager, it was just one more way to unwind. Michael Jordan gets away on a golf course, he said. "Dennis doesn't play golf."

Rodman, sporting a red, yellow and green haircut, spent Sunday and Monday nights whooping it up in Vegas with his rock star friends. "I went and had a good time," he said. "I got rid of this bad taste in my mouth. I'm not married. I don't have to co-tertain a family, so I wanted to get the hell out and relax."

Clyde misses 'get even' chance on Edwards

Rugby League

Shaun Edwards is one of the London Broncos team to play in Canberra on Sunday, thus denying the opposing Lions forward, Bradley Clyde, the chance for what Australians would call a "get-even".

Edwards was sent off for a high tackle on Clyde during the Test at Wembley in 1994 and Clyde - no doubt with stirring

up interest in this weekend's match in mind - had expressed a wish to "have a shot" in return.

He will not now have the chance, because a hamstring injury, which forced Edwards off the field at Brisbane and arguably cost London the match last Friday, has not improved sufficiently. That means that Josh White will partner Tulsa Tolett at half-back.

The Leeds coach, Dean Bell,

has made two changes for tomorrow's game in Adelaide. Francis Cummins moves to centre for the injured Richie Blackmore, with Leroy Rivett coming in on the wing. Terry Newton will be on the bench, along with Graham Holroyd, whose reported link to Richmond is a mystery to the club.

"We know absolutely nothing about it," said the Leeds chief executive, Gary Hetherington.

Walker battles through to take on Martin

Squash

Chris Walker, the England No 1, celebrated his 30th birthday by beating Tim Garner 12-15, 15-5, 8-15, 15-8, 15-12 at the Al Abram International Championships in Cairo yesterday.

Walker, seeded sixth, fell behind 2-1 in games before he woke up to the danger posed by Garner, the England No 11, but

Walker apparently cruising to victory at 12-8 in the fifth game, he lost four rallies in a row as Garner fought back again.

A conduct warning for Garner seemed to throw him out of his stride. He said: "I have never had a conduct warning in my life before. I was just querying a strange no-let decision when this came completely out of the blue."

Walker next meets Brett Mar-

tin, the 34-year-old Australian, on the illuminated transparent court beneath the Pyramids. Paul Johnson will meet the world No 1, Pakistan's Jansher Khan, in tomorrow's second round after he defeated the Canadian Graham Ryding 7-15, 15-9, 14-15, 15-9, 15-6. Also in the first round, Simon Parke defeated Pakistan's Zarak Jahan 15-13, 15-3, 15-4 in 35 minutes.

NEWMARKET
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Tiger's major assault
Andy Farrell looks at the field
for golf's US Open, page 29

sport

England coming of age
Glenn Moore on the potential
of Hoddle's side, page 30

Hamman sells up without moving out



Hamman: Still 'in complete charge of all key decisions'

Football
PHIL SHAW

Q: When is the buy-out of a football club not a buy-out? **A:** When Sam Hamman is doing the selling.

Hamman, the Lebanese owner of Wimbledon, confirmed yesterday that he was relinquishing his majority shareholding in the Premiership club to two Norwegian businessmen for £26m. And he intimated that the new investors would probably bankroll the building of a stadium in south-west London.

Yet within hours of appearing to step out of the front line, Hamman announced that the

Oslo-based fishing magnate, Kjell Inge Røe, and his business partner, Bjørn Rune Gjelsten, had agreed to leave him "in complete charge" of all "key decisions". He would carry on as managing director and run Wimbledon much as he had done for two decades.

The football world has come to expect the unexpected from Wimbledon and Hamman. A fierce defender of the "Crazy Gang" spirit, he claimed he chose Røe and Gjelsten precisely because they understood the unique nature and traditions of the club.

The Norwegians, who lost out to the Caspian Group in an attempted takeover of Leeds

United last summer, began their friendship at school. Røe dropped out and began working on a fishing boat, eventually saving enough money to buy first a boat and eventually one of the world's biggest fleets; Gjelsten went on to complete a business degree in Colorado.

Pooling Røe's entrepreneurial flair and Gjelsten's financial nous, the pair took over one of Scandinavia's leading holding companies before forming the Aker RGI ASA group in 1982. They also hold the controlling interest in Molde, who developed Ole Gunnar Solskjær before transferring him to Manchester United, and have already intimated that the Nor-

wegian club could be used to develop players for Wimbledon.

For Hamman, who has failed to persuade Merton council to pay for a new ground since the club vacated Plough Lane for a ground-share at Crystal Palace, the deal offers the prospect of Wimbledon returning to their spiritual home. "We have no definite plans," he admitted. "All we know is that we probably will move. Selhurst Park is a good stadium, but if we want to be among the biggest then we need our own ground."

Amid a maelstrom of metaphors, Hamman insisted to Clark Kent: "No one knows that he is Superman" and Gjel-

sten were not actually taking control. "I'm not selling out. I'll be in complete charge of all key decisions. I am the steering wheel. My foot is on the accelerator and the brake."

"All we have at this stage is an engagement to get married, and it will be at least a few months before the marriage is consummated. I'll be delighted to call them my partners in the future, but we're not looking at them as sugar daddies."

Seemingly contradicting himself, he added: "Money is available, though it's embarrassing to say how much. The only thing that matters is that it's profitable to Wimbledon."

"The way I see football go-

ing is that you need to have a lot of money to survive. If we want to continue to progress then we need these people. We need to be ready for things like pay-per-view and the European League, which will be here in a few years."

Hamman, who said he had picked the pair after talking to "some of the most influential people in the world", also spoke of making Wimbledon "one of the biggest clubs in Europe". But alluding to Fabrizio Ravanelli's alleged earnings at Middlesbrough, he warned: "We'll still do things the Wimbledon way. There'll be no figures of £42,000-a-week at this club."

The deal marks another re-

markable chapter in the story of the club who began life 108 years ago as Old Central FC, playing in the shadow of the windmill on Wimbledon Common. Initially members of the Clapham League, they might never have turned professional but for Clacton's withdrawal, al creating a vacancy in the Southern League 34 years ago.

Wimbledon went on to replace Workington in the Fourth Division in 1977, reaching what is now the Premiership within nine years and winning the FA Cup in 1988. Now, having established themselves among the big fish in playing terms, they appear to have landed the financial clout to move into uncharted waters

Bentley try puts Lions in fast lane

Rugby Union

CHRIS HEWETT
reports from Johannesburg
Gauteng
British Isles



John Bentley, his Test place in jeopardy after a flawed performance in Pretoria last weekend, scored one of the great individual tries in Lions history at Ellis Park last night to give the tourists their first victory over a Super 12 Province.

The former rugby league wing left five Gauteng tacklers for dead, and coming as it did just seven minutes after Austin Healey's superb opening try, it ripped the game from the South Africans' grasp in the most dramatic fashion imaginable.

Bentley struck on 67 minutes, picking up the ball fully 60 metres out, beating two tackles on the wide right before curving inside and giving three more defenders the slip before finishing off under the post. Gauteng breathed fire in the final ten but with the Lions' back row of Tim Rodber, Rob Wainwright and Neil Back giving everything in defence, they were restricted to an injury time try by Andre Vos, their blind side flanker.

Dawie Du Toit made an embarrassing foul-up of his first penalty shot after Tim Rodber and Neil Back killed the ball on the floor but made no mistake after five minutes when John Bentley was caught well offside near his own posts.

Mike Catt squared it almost immediately from distance but the Lions were still under the cosh - and in more

ways than one. Will Greenwood's try-saving tackle on Joe Gillingham in the right corner was quickly followed by a humdinger of a punch by Chris Rossouw, the Boks' World Cup-winning hooker from 1995, on Barry Williams, his opposite number. Williams had chosen to use Bruce Thorne as a dummy at a line-out, but it was Rossouw who received the ear-bashing from Mr Henning.

While Catt struggled to adjust his radar - he hit the left-hand post twice in the opening half - du Toit settled into his rhythm with two relatively straightforward shots to give Gauteng a 9-3 advantage at the break. But the Lions finished the first 40 minutes with a spell of encouraging territorial advantage, and had Tony Underwood not stumbled inside the home 22 after excellent work from Back, Rob Wainwright and Catt, an opening try would have been his for the taking.

That strong finish to the first period galvanised the Lions and with Back buzzing around like an entire swarm of bees, Gauteng were on their uppers from the restart. Catt was short and wide with an early penalty effort but Jeremy Guscott contributed one of his dangerous chip-and-chase raids to win an attacking scrum - a valuable platform wasted when Back knocked on in the tackle five metres short.

With Jeremy Davidson the dominant force at the line-out, Guscott was finding the son of space that makes him a threat to any defence in the world. Sadly, an uncharacteristic missed tackle on Gillingham allowed Gauteng to turn the tables and it needed two of Tony Underwood's bravest



Break-out: Rob Wainwright, of the Lions, strides away from Gauteng's Johan Roux at Ellis Park last night

Photograph: Alex Livesey/Allsport

tackles to repulse them. One on Johan Roux in the right corner and a second on Rossouw in the left.

After the stern and unforgiving close-quarter battle before the interval, the game was now alive with pace and adventure. Nick Beal's back through would have resulted in a try but for brilliant defensive work from Hendriks and An-

dre Vos while in turn, Guscott made amends for his earlier slip by pulling the rampaging Piet Krause to the floor inches from the Lions' line.

Then, on the hour, came the breakthrough. Bentley used his strength to protect Lions' possession close to the right touch line and with help from Williams and Rodber, Greenwood squeezed through the

smallest of holes into the Gauteng 22, fed Austin Healey with a sublime pass out of the tackle and turned in jubilation to see the scrum-half sprinter outstrip the cover on his way to the right corner. Neil Jenkins, on for the injured Underwood, sank the most awkward of conversions and the Lions were in front for the first time.

Gauteng: D de Vries, J Gillingham, J van der Walt, H de Ruiter, P Hendriks, L van Rensburg, J Roux, R Gray, C Rossouw, U Dutton, S2, K van Greunig, K Wiese (capt), B Thorne, A Vos, W Brownham, P Krause.

British Isles: N Beal (Northampton and England), J Bentley (Newcastle and Eng-land), J Guscott (Bath and England), W Greenwood (Leicester), T Underwood (Newcastle and England), M Catt (Bath and Eng-land), A Healey (Leicester and Eng-land), T Smith (Worcestershire and Scotland), A Williams (Richmond and Wales), P Wels- lace (Scarlets and Ireland), N Redman (Bath and Eng-land), S Davidson (London Irish and Ireland), R Wainwright (Worcestershire and Scotland), T Rodber (Northampton and Eng-land), and N Back (Leicester and Eng-land). Replacements: N Jenkins (Pontypool and Wales) for Underwood, S5, Wainwright, T Henning (Northern Transvaal).

Graf's career in doubt

Tennis

JOHN ROBERTS

"I feel I'm in seventh heaven," was how Steffi Graf summarised her Wimbledon triumph last year. Now the valedictory articles are being prepared. And not for the first time.

The great German athlete's career is under threat again following further surgery, on this occasion to repair her left knee five days before her 28th birthday on Saturday.

Rehabilitation is expected to take six months, and Graf's Austrian surgeon, Reinhard Wein- stabl, has expressed a doubt that the seven-times Wimbledon champion will be able to compete again at the highest level. Graf issued a statement after the operation, saying she was "confident that I will return to

the sport which I love so much - and in good health."

Weinstabl, unfortunately, was less certain. "That is certainly our aim," he said. "Whether that aim can be reached one cannot say now."

The German Olympic team and tennis federation doctor, Joseph Keul, had supportive words for Graf. "It is a sign of wear and tear that, however, by no means has to mean the end of a career," he said. "I think that Steffi Graf will be 100 per cent again by the end of the year."

Graf, a perfectionist, is unlikely to settle for less than the highest level, even though it will be a difficult decision. She does not have a clear idea what to do with her life after tennis and a hefty slice of her fortune has been lost as a result of her father/manager, Peter's, problems with the German tax authorities.

Currently ranked No 3 in the world, her lowest position for a decade, Graf finds herself caught in the incoming tide of a new generation. Martina Hingis has supplanted her as the No 1, Iva Majoli has won the French Open, and Anna Kournikova and Venus Williams are in the process of cutting their teeth.

This would be hard enough for Graf to deal with if she were fit and confident, but there have been signs that her opponents no longer fear her, 21 Grand Slam titles or not.

At least she will be in good hands. The Gars am Kamp centre has been used by numerous sportsmen and women - the former Formula One racing champion Niki Lauda recuperated there from severe burns suffered in a crash in Germany and returned there recently following a kidney transplant.

Official warning for Villeneuve

Motor racing

Jacques Villeneuve, the Formula One World championship leader who is tipped to lift the title this season, received a warning from the sport's governing body yesterday for criticising planned regulation changes.

After appearing before the world council of the FIA, the sport's governing body of the sport, the Williams-Renault driver said in Paris that he could face a ban if he upset the authorities again. "It's just a warn-

ing which means I might get a suspension next time, if there is a next time," he said.

The Canadian, who will be driving in his home grand prix on Sunday, created uproar in the paddock at Imola last April by insisting that the changes for 1998, involving the use of grooved tyres and narrower cars, were "ridiculous".

On the eve of the opening day's practice for the San Marino Grand Prix, Villeneuve said: "These new regulations are just a joke. To run on these tyres is just ridiculous. It takes all the

precision out of the driving and the racing - as well as the fun - and it is just a ridiculous idea."

After talking to the FIA president, Max Mosley, and other officials for 10 minutes, he said: "It was a discussion to make things clear and everything went well. The problem is not what I've said but the way I said it. I should have used other words."

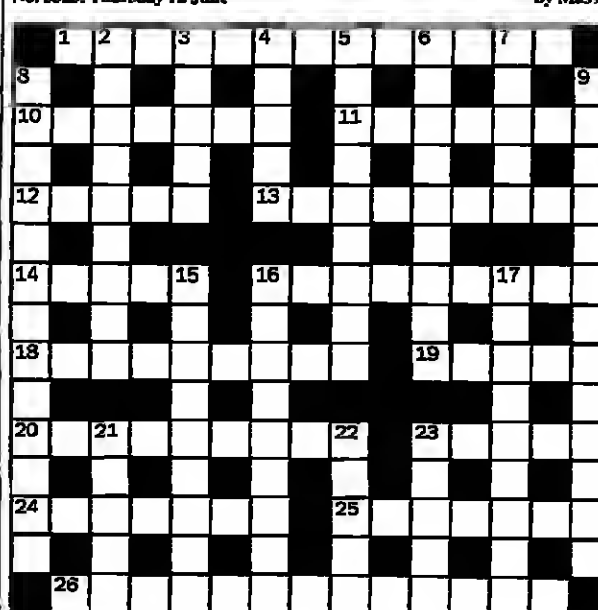
Mosley said in Monaco last month that the changes would stand, having been proposed by the team's engineers, agreed unanimously, and passed by the FIA's world council.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3323, Thursday 12 June

By Mass

Wednesday's solution

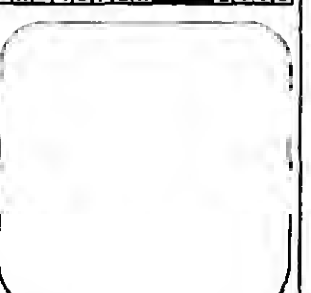
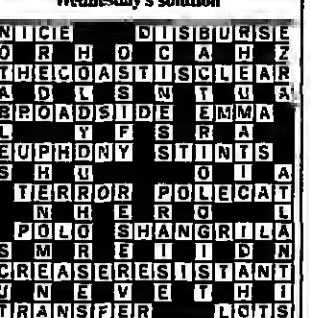


ACROSS

- 1 The French diminutive chap's wearing dearer jumper (13)
- 10 Identify gun in Eastern boat (7)
- 11 Mark or Judas? (7)
- 12 Writer's rolling in drink and bumbling (5)
- 13 Just dishes? (5-4)
- 14 Man from stern of the smack can be heard (5)
- 16 Earthquake factor. Half tremor (9)
- 18 It is a rule possibly to promote routine (9)
- 19 Dance with a medico in S. America (5)
- 20 The fling I arranged as clubland entertainment (9)

DOWN

- 2 Equipped, as it happened (6-3)
- 3 Play with mounting. large-scale measure? (5)
- 4 Fellows in digs (5)
- 5 Girl's pet, timid creature kept around home (9)
- 6 A truck on headland causing apprehension (9)
- 7 Former paintings put up as collateral (5)
- 8 Water rate remained unstable around North? (13)
- 9 Questioned, divorcee during trial raised material article (5-8)
- 15 Gather, take in rough floor cover (6-3)
- 16 Knock out songster entered among the best (9)
- 17 Paddy downed milk (9)
- 21 Blow top of omelette, then taste (5)
- 22 English bachelor in cheap joint (5)
- 23 Leaves out with sprinkling of blossom, it seems (5)



How many balls do you need to make a fortune on the lottery? Two extremely large ones.



Also this week, the worst bushy-haired England. Plus the man who took last year's prize money out of the country before his wife.

£1 EVERY WEDNESDAY

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